

FORBIDDEN WORLDS *presents* HERBIE

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

Compilation
The original Herbie
stories from :
Forbidden Worlds
73, 94, 110, 114, 116





STORIES of STRANGE ADVENTURE

NO. 72-DEC.

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



AUTHORITY

FORBIDDEN WORLDS

10¢

Can a MAN CRASH
THROUGH THE BARRIER
OF TIME ITSELF? SEE IT
HAPPEN, IN...

*"The RIDDLE of
ROBERT O'MALLEY!"*

THIS... CAN'T
BE! SHOT DOWN BY
JAP ZEROS...AND
NOW TRAPPED ABOARD
AN ANCIENT
PIRATE SHIP!



HERE'S A REAL OFFBEAT STORY, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO GO FOR YARNS THAT ARE DIFFERENT!
GET SET FOR SURPRISES GALORE IF YOU DARE TO COME ALONG ON...

HERBIE'S QUIET SATURDAY AFTERNOON!



IT WAS A PTA MEETING, AND THE SPEAKER'S SUBJECT WAS AN IMPORTANT ONE...

YES, I REPEAT—THE BOYS OF TODAY ARE THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW!



YOU MUST SEE, THEREFORE, THAT WHAT WE NEED IN THIS COUNTRY ARE **REAL BOYS**—BOYS OF ACTION! BOYS WHO ARE ALWAYS OUT DOING THINGS! GEORGE WASHINGTON, FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, WAS SUCH A BOY... SO WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN!



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EVEN TODAY, YOU'LL FIND THE MEN WHO MAKE AMERICA GREAT ARE MEN OF ACTION! LIKE MICKY MANTLE, STAN MUGALI! AND THEN THERE WAS LUCKY LINDY...AND RED GRANGE...BOYS WHO DID THINGS, WHO BECAME **MEN WHO DID THINGS!**



I HADN'T REALIZED NOW IMPORTANT IT WAS THAT **KIDS** DO THINGS, TOO!

ALL THOSE GREAT FIGURES HE MENTIONED, AND **WHOM HAVE WE GOT? HERBIE!**



MR. YES... LITTLE HERBIE POPNECKER...



THERE HE GOES, OFF TO SCHOOL! A LEADER OF TOMORROW... **HUH!**



OH, IT ISN'T THAT I DON'T **LOVE** THE BOY... BUT HE DOESN'T **DO** ANYTHING, OR SAY ANYTHING, OR HAVE ANY IMAGINATION! GOOD GOSH, THAT I SHOULD BE THE FATHER OF A LITTLE FAT **NOTHING!**

NOW, NOW-- YOU SHOULDN'T TALK THAT WAY ABOUT YOUR OWN SON! AFTER ALL, HE **MEANS** WELL!



YES, HE MEANT WELL... BUT ON SATURDAYS, IT WAS PARTICULARLY BAD...

THE BOYS ARE OUT HAVING THEMSELVES A TIME! GOLLY, I REMEMBER NOW IT WAS WHEN I WAS A KID! I USED TO GO FISHING, JUST LIKE THAT FELLA-- AND I'D PLAY MARBLES AND MUMBLETY-PEG--



EEE-YOWWW! IT'S A **HOMER!**

AND GOSH, BASEBALL... THAT WAS THE MOST FUN OF ALL! IT'S SURE GREAT TO BE A BOY-- THAT FEELING OF **DOING** THINGS, ON THE GO ALL THE TIME! IT'S **WONDERFUL!**



AND THEN DAD TURNED TO CONFRONT---HERBIE!

OH,
N-NO!



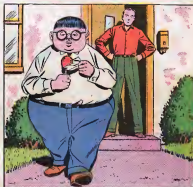
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE LOST HIS TEMPER, BUT HE COULDN'T HELP HIMSELF---

DON'T YOU EVER
DO ANYTHING **OTHER**
BOYS DO, BUT NOT YOU!
ALL YOU DO IS SIT,
SIT---

PLEASE, DAD!
YOU'VE GOT TO
LEARN TO
CONTROL
YOURSELF!



NEVER MIND, I'LL HANDLE THIS! --- YOU!
I WANT YOU TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AND
DO SOMETHING! THAT IS, IF YOU **CAN** DO
ANYTHING --- WHICH I DOUBT!



PSST!

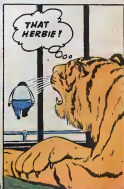


HEY,
THERE'S
NERBIE
POPNECKER!

OH,
HER-BEEER!

LOOKIT
HIM HEADIN'
FOR AN
EXCITIN'
GAME OF
NOTHIN'!





(CONTINUED ON PAGE AFTER NEXT)

IT WAS A QUIET SATURDAY AFTERNOON, WITH NOTHING TO DO BUT WALK! AND SO HERBIE WALKED PAST THE OFFICES OF THE **DAILY BUGLE**...

TOO BAD---IT'S A GREAT LOSS TO THE NATION! YOUNG SENATOR STEVENS WAS ONE OF THE **BEST!** BUT IF THOSE PLANES CAN'T FIND ANY SIGN OF HIM, HE MUST BE DEAD ALREADY!

THE DAILY BUGLE

EXTRA!
NO TRACE OF SENATOR STEVENS, BLOWN OUT TO SEA BY STORM IN PLANE BORROWED FROM FRIEND. SEARCH PLANES REPORT FAILURE--BELIEVED DEAD.

BUT THAT'S NOT SO, SIR!! IT JUST HAPPENS THAT I KNOW WHERE...

MOVE ALONG, SONNY! DON'T YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO INTERRUPT GROWNUPS WHEN THEY'RE TALKING?

IF--IF YOU COULD ONLY ARRANGE TO BROADCAST THAT THERE ARE **ROCKETS** STORED IN A COMPARTMENT OF THE CABIN ROOF OF THE PLANE THAT SENATOR STEVENS BORROWED FROM ME---HE'D HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING ABOUT THEM! IF HE'S DOWN FLOATING ON THE SURFACE, HE COULD FIRE THEM AND SOMEBODY MIGHT SEE THEM---

YOU TOLD ME ALL THAT YESTERDAY---AND WE'VE BEEN BROADCASTING IT CONSTANTLY SINCE! OBVIOUSLY, HE'S NOT GETTING THE BROADCASTS---BECAUSE HE'S **DEAD!**

EDITOR

PLEASE---I COULD TELL YOU HOW TO GET TO HIM---

WHO LET YOU IN HERE, ANYWAYS? **GET OUT OF HERE--BEFORE I THROW YOU OUT!**

AND SO HERBIE GOT OUT---AND WALKED SOME MORE! HE CAME TO A PIER, AND HE WALKED OUT ONTO THAT---

HEY, YOU! CLEAR OFF HERE---THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR HEY? SAIR---**H-HOLY MACKEREL!** AM I **SEEBIN'** THINGS? HE'S **D-DISAPPEARIN'!**

SOON AFTER---THE SEARCH PLANES WERE ABOUT TO CALL OFF THEIR HUNT---

IT'S NO USE---WE COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING DOWN THERE IF THERE WERE SOME-THING!

AND THERE ISN'T, BECAUSE STEVENS MUST BE LONG SINCE DEAD! LET'S TURN BACK!

HOLD IT! OVER THERE...
IT'S A ROCKET! THERE'S
SOMETHING DOWN ON THE
SURFACE, ALL RIGHT! DROP
A FLARE AND LET'S GO
DOWN AND LOOK!

KER-POW!

**IT'S HIM,
ALL RIGHT!
IT'S SENATOR
STEVENS!**

WHEN THE RESCUE WAS MADE...

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
SENATOR?
HOW'D YOU
EVER LOCATE
THOSE ROCKETS?

I---I WAS ON THE
WING---I'D ABOUT
GIVEN UP HOPE---
WHEN---OH, YOU
WON'T BELIEVE
THIS, YOU **CAN'T**---

---I LOOKED UP---AND SAW---A LITTLE BOY WALK-
ING DOWN OUT OF THE SKY!--

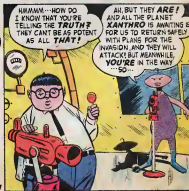
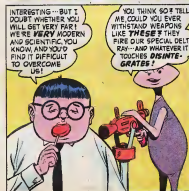
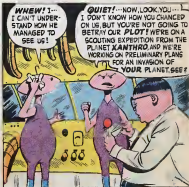
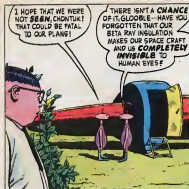
YOU'RE GOING TO
NEED **ROCKETS!** YOU'LL
FIND THEM IN A COMPART-
MENT IN THE CABIN
ROOF!

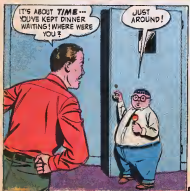
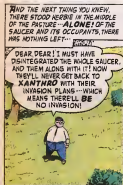
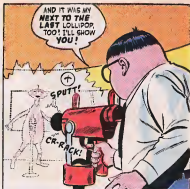
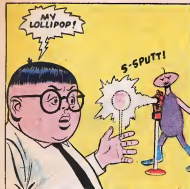
---AND THAT'S---THE WAY
IT HAPPENED! A---A KIND OF
FAT LITTLE BOY, HE WAS---WITH
GLASSES---AND---AND A LOLLI-
POP! AND THE NEXT SECOND
---HE'D **DISAPPEARED!**

POOR FELLA
---HE'S **OUT
OF HIS
HEAD!**

MEANWHILE, WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HERBIE?
IT WAS DARK ALREADY, AND HE WAS GETTING KIND
OF **BORED!** MATTER OF FACT, HE WAS TAKING
THE SHORT CUT HOME ACROSS MURPHY'S
PASTURE---









STORIES of STRANGE ADVENTURE

NO 94, MAR-APR.

IND.

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
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AUTHORITY

FORBIDDEN WORLDS

10¢

DON'T LOOK NOW...BUT THE
UNIVERSE IS AFRAID OF
YOU! FIND OUT WHY IN A
THRILLING STORY...
"THE CONQUERING BREED!"

SO THEY THINK THEY'RE
ALL-POWERFUL DO THEY?
THEY DON'T KNOW THAT
I'M A MEMBER OF THE
CONQUERING BREED!

HE'S BACK
AGAIN!

HERBIE POPNECKER, THE WORLD'S STRANGEST
BOY, TACKLES THE SUPERNATURAL, IN...

"HERBIE and
the SPIRITS!"

MAYBE IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF HERBIE HADN'T CHANGED HIS SCHOOL! BUT IT **DID** HAPPEN, AND THE WORLD OF THE **SUPERNATURAL** POSED A DEADLY THREAT TO ALL OF US! IF YOU WANT THE EXCITING DETAILS, LET'S LOOK IN ON THE STORY OF...

HERBIE and the SPIRITS!

STORY: SHANE OSHEA
ART: OGDEN WHITNEY



IT ALL STARTED WHEN...

MOVING MEANT A NEW SCHOOL, AND I'M WORRIED! I --- I HOPE THEY LIKE HIM THERE!

I'M INCLINED TO DOUBT IT. LET'S FACE IT, DEAR...



...OUR BOY IS A LITTLE --- WELL, **STRANGE!**



HEAR THERE'S A NEW FELLA COMIN' INTO OUR CLASS --- A TRANSFER FROM THE EIGHTH WARD SCHOOL OVER AT DALTON.

THAT PLACE TURNS OUT THE BEST ATHLETES IN THE WHOLE STATE! WE'RE IN LUCK!



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HE BIT ALL RIGHT---HE'S INSIDE ALREADY. NOW TO FOLLOW HIM, AND SCARE THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF HIM!



BUT AS THEY ROUNDED A TURN IN THE OLD HALL---



YOU'RE NOT HERBIE!

NEVER MIND THAT---WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I RENTED THIS HOUSE TO CONDUCT MY EXPERIMENTS---

EXPERIMENTS? WHAT KIND?



CONTACTING THE SPIRIT WORLD! I'M A PROFESSOR OF THE OCCULT AND HAVE STUDIED THE SUPERNATURAL, CONVINCED THAT THERE CAN BE A JOINING OF THE SUPERNATURAL AND NATURAL WORLDS IN A SO-CALLED "HAUNTED" HOUSE LIKE THIS!

UH... SEEN ANY GHOSTS, DOC?



OH, YES---**MANY** OF THEM! IN MY COMMUNICATION WITH THE SUPERNATURAL, I HAVE ESTABLISHED A DOORWAY HERE BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS. COME---I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!

HERE IT IS---THE DOORWAY THAT LEADS INTO THE **SPIRIT DIMENSION**! WHY, I HAVE ONLY TO UNLOCK IT, LIKE THIS---

THIS IS GONNA BE **RICH**! BOY, WHAT A LOONY!





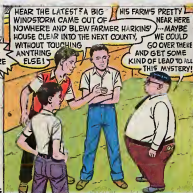
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK **THERE!** WHAT SAY WE STAY HERE AND TAKE OVER?

GREAT IDEA! ALL WE'VE GOT TO DO IS CREATE ENOUGH CHAOS, SPREAD ENOUGH FEAR AND THEY'RE BOUND TO SURRENDER TO US!

IT CAN'T MISS! I KNOW THESE HUMANS, AND THEY'RE ALL CHICKEN!

AND SO---THE SPIRITS GOT TO WORK---

CR-RASH!



HEAR THE LATEST! A BIG WINDSTORM CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND BLEW FARMER HARKINS' HOUSE CLEAR INTO THE NEXT COUNTY, WITHOUT TOUCHING ANYTHING ELSE!

HIS FARM'S PRETTY NEAR HERE ---MAYBE WE COULD GO OVER THERE AND GET SOME KIND OF LEAD TO ALL THIS MYSTERY!

DAILY NEWS-JOURNAL
PANIC SPREADS AS STRANGE CATASTROPHES CONTINUE

NO NATURAL CAUSES CAN BE FOUND FOR THESE DISASTERS! IF THEIR CAUSE IS **SUPERNATURAL**, THERE IS NO DEFENSE AND WE ARE LOST!



(CONTINUED ON PAGE AFTER NEXT)

LONG INTO THE NIGHT, HERBIE THOUGHT--AND THOUGHT--

ALL NONSENSE, I'D SAY! WHAT THE GOV/CROW CLAIMS HE SAW--THE COW--THE PIG--THE CAT--**MASS ILLUSION**, THAT'S WHAT IT MUSTA BEEN!

SUDDENLY, A STRANGE SHADOW FELL UPON THE FLOOR AND LOOKING OUT WITH A START, HE SAW--

GULP!

AT LAST, HE KNEW WHAT THE WORLD WAS UP AGAINST! NEXT DAY, AT A TOP LEVEL CONFERENCE HELD TO DISCUSS THE EMERGENCY--

THINGS **CAN'T** KEEP ON LIKE THIS!

IF ONLY SOMEBODY COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS BEHIND IT ALL, WE'D KNOW WHAT STEPS TO TAKE!

I KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND IT, GENTLEMEN!

HUH? HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE --AND HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?

NEVER MIND THAT! IF YOU WANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF ALL THIS, START LOOKING FOR FOUR CHARACTERS--**A WITCH, A GHOST, A CREEP AND FRANKENSTEIN!**

...AND **STAY OUT!**

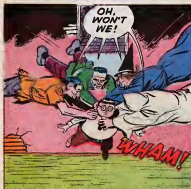
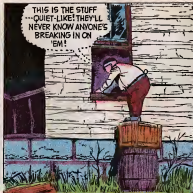
SLAM!

THUD!

TCH, TCH! I CAN SEE THAT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO HANDLE THIS WHOLE AFFAIR **PERSONALLY!**

HE RETURNED HOME FOR SOME MORE HIGH-LEVEL THINKING-- LET'S SEE--

IF I WERE A WITCH--OR A GHOST--OR A CREEP--OR FRANKENSTEIN--WHERE WOULD I HANG OUT?





HERE, LET ME TRY! I'LL HAVE TO WARM UP A BIT FIRST, OF COURSE--

SPOOKS AND SPIRITS, WEIRD AND STRANGE... FROM WHAT THOU ART, I BID THEE CHANGE!



AHEM! NOT BAD... CONSIDERING I ONLY HAD A TABLE TO WORK WITH!

DON'T MAKE SUCH A BIG THING OUT OF IT! LET'S SEE IT WORK ON HIM!



BUT IT WOULDN'T WORK ON HERBIE--

DIDN'T YOU HEAR THE MAGIC INCANTATION? I TOLD YOU TO CHANGE, GOLDURN IT!

DON'T WANNA--



THE OTHERS TRIED THEIR MAGIC, TOO--AND FAILED--

MAYBE IT'S THAT LOLLIPOP OF HIS! MAYBE IT'S REALLY A TALISMAN THAT PROTECTS HIM AGAINST US!

OKAY... LET'S SEE FOR OURSELVES!



HEY, THIS IS DEE-LICIOUS!



GIMME A TASTE!

LET ME TRY IT!

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO GET AWAY!



PUFF! THE WORLD'S IN AWFUL DANGER--BUT WHO'S EVER GONNA BELIEVE ME? I'VE GOTTA DO IT ALL MYSELF--BUT WHAT? HOW'M I GONNA--PUFF-PUFF--STOP 'EM? WHAT'S THEIR WEAK POINT?







AMERICAN
COMICS GROUP
ACG

STORIES of STRANGE ADVENTURE

NO. 110 - MARCH-APRIL

IND.

APPROVED
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AUTHORITY

FORBIDDEN WORLDS

12¢

**HE'S BACK,
FOLKS!**

The WORLD'S
STRANGEST HERO—in
AN ACTION-PACKED
THRILLER YOU'LL
NEVER FORGET! LOOK
—HERE'S JUST ONE
OF THE MENACES
HERBIE COMES
UP AGAINST!



HERBIE POPNECKER'S BACK, FOLKS! AND WHETHER YOU'RE A SCIENCE FICTION FAN OR A PATRIOT FOR THE SUPERNATURAL, YOU'LL GET YOUR KICKS OUT OF HIS LATEST ADVENTURES, SO HOLD TIGHT AS WE BRING YOU THE AMAZING LOWDOWN ON---

HERBIE

and the

SNEDDIGER'S SALAD OIL



STORY: SHANE
O'SHEA
ART: OGDEN
WHITNEY

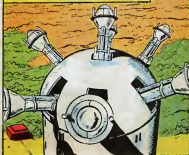
OUR STORY OPENS AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING ON THE PLANET BERTRAM OF THE 4TH SOLAR GALAXY---

THOSE ARE THE FACTS. THE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR PLANET IS GRADUALLY DISINTEGRATING, BECOMING UNBREATHABLE. WE'RE FACED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE, INCLUDING OURSELVES.

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO---KEEP OUR SCIENTISTS WORKING DESPERATELY!



AND 50 BATTERIES OF TELE-TUBES PROBED THROUGH THE VAST REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE, SEARCHING FRANTICALLY FOR SOME INGREDIENT WHICH MIGHT RESTORE THE VANISHING ATMOSPHERE---



THE ELECTRONIC TELESCOPES COULD FERRET OUT AND ANALYZE THE TINIEST OBJECT, NO MATTER HOW DISTANT. AND SO IT HAPPENED THAT---

AND SO A MIGHTY ARMADA DEPARTED---

---AND AS IT ENTERED EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED---

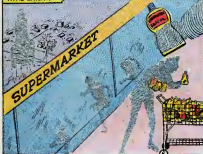
OUR SCIENCE WILL HIDE US FROM THEM. WE'VE SURROUNDED OURSELVES WITH AN INVISIBILITY FIELD--THE EARTHLINGS WILL SEE NEITHER US NOR OUR ROCKETS!

GREAT TIDINGS YOUR MAJESTY--WE HAVE DISCOVERED WHAT WE SEEK! IT IS SITUATED ON **PLANET EARTH**--A PRODUCT KNOWN BY HUMANS AS **SNEDDIGER'S SALAD OIL!**

LET OUR SPACECRAFT BE DISPATCHED AT ONCE TO LOOT EARTH OF IT WHEREVER IT CAN BE FOUND!



IN CITIES AND TOWNS THROUGHOUT AMERICA, THEY MADE THEIR SECRET LANDINGS IN THE DARK OF NIGHT, FREELY THEY PASSED THROUGH WINDOWS AND DOORS ON THEIR VITAL ERRAND---



NOTHING OF THIS WAS KNOWN NEXT MORNING IN THE HOME OF THE **POPNECKER** FAMILY, NOT EVEN OUR OLD PAL **HERBIE** SUSPECTED WHAT HAD HAPPENED---

YOUR AUNT LAVINIA'S COMING TO DINNER TONIGHT, **HERBIE**--AND YOU KNOW HOW SHE IS IF SHE CAN'T HAVE **SNEDDIGER'S SALAD OIL**. AND WE'RE ALL OUT OF IT.

AH, MA... YOU KNOW THOSE LONG LINES AT THE SUPERMARKET.



OH, ALL RIGHT--YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO. ONLY AUNT LAVINIA WILL BE VERY DISPLEASED WHEN SHE HEARS YOU DIDN'T WANT TO. AND YOUR BIRTHDAY'S NEXT WEEK--AND SHE ALWAYS SENDS YOU THE BIGGEST BOX OF LOLLIPOPS---

WHO SAID I DIDN'T WANT TO GO? I'M GOING--I'M GOING! I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO TODAY ANYWAY---

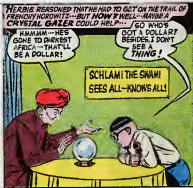
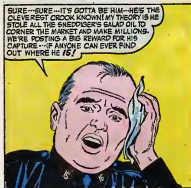


BUT AT THE LOCAL SUPERMARKET---

HEY! WHERE'S IT AT?

DIDN'T YOU HEAR, **HERBIE**? ALL OUR **SNEDDIGER'S** HAS BEEN STOLEN--MATTER OF FACT, IT'S BEEN STOLEN OUT OF EVERY STORE IN TOWN. YEGH, IT'S A BIG MYSTERY!









NO, WE DIDN'T FIND ANY OF THE STOLEN SALAD OIL ON THE PREMISES—BUESS IT WAS SOMEBODY ELSE WHO GOT IT, AFTER ALL. BUT WHY WORRY? THERE WAS A BIG REWARD OUT FOR FRENDY ... YOU STAND TO COLLECT 20,000...

LOLLIPOPS?

WHY, NO... DOLLARS, OF COURSE.

THAT'S WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF!

LET'S SEE NOW, IF I WERE A BOTTLE OF SNEDDIGER'S SALAD OIL AND SOMEBODY STOLE ME, WHERE WOULD I GO--?



WHAT HAPPENED?

OH---IT'S YOU! WHAT AN EXPERIENCE! THERE I WAS FLYIN' ALONG AND MINDIN' MY OWN BUSINESS---



"BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENIN', I WAS SURROUNDED BY THEM---AND I COULD EVEN HEAR WHAT THEY WERE SAYIN'..."

WE GOT EVERY LAST BOTTLE OF SNEDDIGER'S SALAD OIL!

WE'RE SAVED! THREE CHEERS FOR THE PLANET BERTRAM OF THE 4TH SOLAR GALAXY!



(CONTINUED ON PAGE AFTER NEXT)

THAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT REASON
IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO FALL WAS
THAT I WAS PRETTY
HIGH UP IN SPACE.
I BEEN PRACTICIN'
TO BE AN ASTRONAUT--

PLANET BERTRAM
...4TH SOLAR
GALAXY...OKAY
...THEN THAT'S WHERE
I'M BOUND
FOR!

gonna be a
long walk...
lucky i know
some short-
cuts.



BARTLING WISE
GUY... TEACH HIM TO
BUTT IN ON MY
TERRITORY...



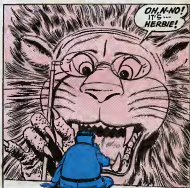
GULP! IT...
IT'S HERBIE
POPNECKER!



WELL, HERBIE WAS A VERY FAST WALKER--SO
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE...









From **YOUR EDITOR-** to **YOU!**

He's back, folks. He's in again. Who? The plump, solemn little character with the horn-rimmed glasses and the ever-present lollipop, that's who, *Herbie Popnecker*. Don't ask us to explain him, because we can't. All we know is that when we least expect him, there he is, walking solemnly through the window of Ye Editor's skyscraper office. Pointing his lollipop sternly, he announces—that he intends to be in our magazine and nobody'd better get in his way. That's how come he walked right into this issue in "*Herbie And The Sneddiger's Salad Oil*". Your Editor was too chicken to stop him, because there's a rumor around that Herbie's lollipop is atom-powered. At any rate, how do you folks like Herbie? (You'd better like him, or chances are you'll never be heard from again.) But while you're still in one piece and before he completely fractures you, write in and tell us where you stand—pro-Herbie, or—if you dare—anti-Herbie. The address is: The Editor, "*Forbidden Worlds*", 331 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

"Dear Editor:—

I think that the No. 104 issue of '*Forbidden Worlds*' was the best comics book I've ever read. Your art was very good, and everybody didn't look alike, as they sometimes do in other magazines. '*My Pal Jeremy*' was the greatest! '*The Old Familiar Faces*' was fair. '*Bg Jupiter*' beat them all. It was one of the best, strangest stories I've seen. I admire '*The Riverboat That Vanished*'. I hope that you keep '*Forbidden Worlds*' as good as it always is. I'll always be a loyal fan of yours!

—David Blair Williamson,
435 Eighth St., Cleveland, Tenn."

You're quite complimentary, David, and we hope that we really deserve all the praise you've given us. We'll try to stay as good as we hope we are!

...

"Dear Editor:—

Whenever you make errors in scientific fact, history or literature, these detract from the story. They should only be permitted when pretty much essential to the story, otherwise they're not poetic license but just plain silly

mistakes. In particular, errors in science annoy the reader. You can take liberties with literature, even history—but not science! I say double-check, and avoid putting dinosaurs (extinct for, *same* 60,000,000 or so years) with cavemen when cave bears will do as well. Also, recall that the second nearest star is 25,000,000,000,000 miles away, and so on. These things will help you, for your stories are otherwise usually very good. But how annoying mistakes are! Recall that many of your readers have had high school education!

—Michael N. Tierstein,
Louisiana State U., Dept. of Math.
Baton Rouge 3, La.

You're making a mistake, Michael, if you think that we talk down to our readers, or let mistakes go through because we figure that they don't know any better. We make our share of errors, of course—that's the penalty you pay for being human. But along with these unintentional boo-boos frequently go others of which we are completely aware. In other words, occasionally we choose to be wrong. Why? For the sake of a better, more exciting, more pictorially attractive story. Like putting dinosaurs in the same time period with cavemen. Of course this isn't accurate, but we don't consider that we're committing any major sin thereby. We're just putting our cavemen up against a more exciting and more eye-filling opponent and that makes for a better yarn. Oh, sure we could use cave bears—but they lack the oomph. This is exactly what is done by both moving pictures and television, and for the same reason. Similarly, we purposely close our eyes to certain science fiction facts. If our story makes it necessary for the hero to travel to a distant star and back within a shorter time period than is physically possible, we stretch the point—and it pays off in terms of more interesting plot. Please, grant us this privilege—we're not hurting anyone! And we like to think that our fans benefit.

...

"Dear Editor:—

I enjoy reading your '*Forbidden Worlds*'. Although I have read only one copy, I enjoyed it very much. No. 104 was wonderful. I liked the whole book, every story in it. '*My Pal Jeremy*'

IND

FORBIDDEN WORLDS

presents

HERBIE

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

AMERICAN
VALUE SYSTEM
AGE

№114
SEPT.

12¢

MAKE FOR THE HILLS
...HE'S BACK! HISTORY'S
MOST HORRIBLE HERO...
**"A LITTLE FAT
NOTHING NAMED
HERBIE!"**



HISTORY TELLS US THAT GREAT EMERGENCIES CREATE GREAT HEROES. HERE'S THE STORY OF THE GREATEST HERO OF THEM ALL. A LITTLE DIFFERENT, MAYBE, BUT VERY GREAT. WHO? NOBODY ELSE BUT YOUR FRIEND AND MINE...

A LITTLE FAT NOTHING NAMED HERBIE!

STORY:- SHANE O'SHEA
ART:- OGDEN WHITNEY



PARENTS OF AMERICA! DO YOU KNOW YOUR OFFSPRING?

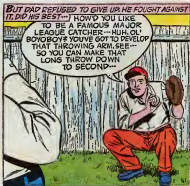
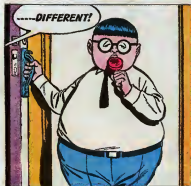
I SURE DO!
MY BOYS A
GREAT
ATHLETE!

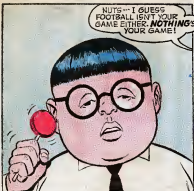


AND MY BOY'S
A GREAT
SCHOLAR!



FORMERLY PUBLISHED MONTHLY JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER. PUBLISHED BIR-MONTHLY JAN.-FEB., MARCH-APRIL, MAY-JUNE, NOV.-DEC. © 1962 by Best Syndicated Features, Inc., 330 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Reprinted with permission from American Comics Group, Inc., 331 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y. Single copies, \$0.12; foreign postage extra. All characters are fictitious and use of any real names is coincidental. For advertising information address American Comics Group, Inc., 331 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y. Second-Class Postage Paid at Sparta, Ill., and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A. No. 114, September, 1962.





NUTS--- I GUESS FOOTBALL ISN'T YOUR GAME EITHER. **NOTHING'S** YOUR GAME!



---AND I GET THESE HEADACHES AND THAT RINGING IN MY EARS--- FOLLOWED BY HEART-BURN AND DEPRESSION! WHAT DO YOU THINK IT CAN BE, DOCTOR?

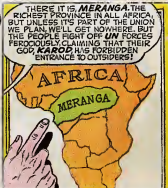
HERBYTIS! YOU'VE GOT A **LITTLE FAT NOTHING** FOR A SON!

JUST AS WE ASKED BEFORE, READERS--- **DO YOU KNOW YOUR OFFSPRING?** SOMETIMES, THE PEOPLE NEAREST ARE THE ONES WHO **DON'T KNOW!** FOR PROOF OF THIS WE SWITCH TO A POINT SOME 2,561 MILES AWAY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.---



HOW CAN WE LET THE WORLD KNOW THE **TRUTH, JFK**--- THAT BEHIND ALL THIS AFRICAN UNREST LIES THE **SUPER-NATURAL?**

SUPPOSING YOU BRIEF ME ON THE FACTS, ADLAI!



THERE IT IS, **MERANGA**. THE RICHEST PROVINCE IN ALL AFRICA, BUT UNLESS IT'S PART OF THE UNION WE PLAN, WE'LL GET NOWHERE. BUT THE PEOPLE FIGHT OFF **UN** FORCES FEROCIOUSLY CLAIMING THAT THEIR GOD, **KAROD** HAS FORBIDDEN ENTRANCE TO OUTSIDERS!



BUT THIS IS **1963**. MAN---YOU CAN'T KEEP TRAINED TROOPS OUT JUST BECAUSE OF SOME PHONY BACKWOODS IDOL!

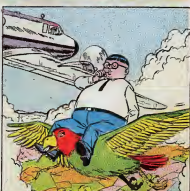
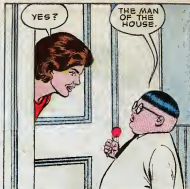
YOU KNOW IT AND I KNOW IT, MR. PRESIDENT. BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THIS IDOL SEEMS TO HAVE --- **POWERS!**

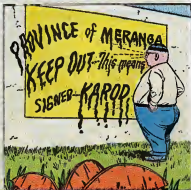
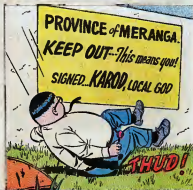


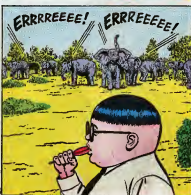
WE'VE SENT OUR SPIES INTO **MERANGA** AND THEY'VE RETURNED WITLESS WITH TERROR, THEIR REASON GONE. THEY INSIST THAT THIS IDOL HAS **LIFE!** WE CAN'T AFFORD A FULL-SCALE INVASION--- THAT MIGHT LEAD TO WAR! AND SHORT OF INVASION, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT MIGHT DO IT---

I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN --- **HERBIE!**

AND SO, NEXT DAY --

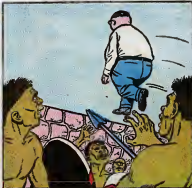


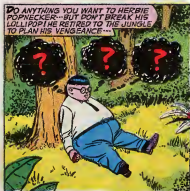
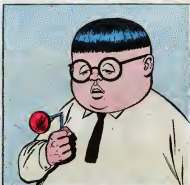
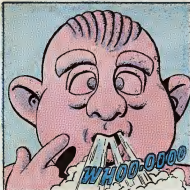




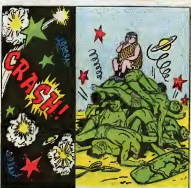


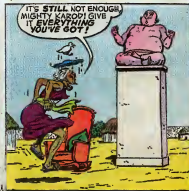
WHEN HE REACHED KAROD'S CITY, WORD OF HIS COMING HAD PRECEDED HIM. THE DEFENDERS WERE OUT IN FORCE...











NOW THE TERRIBLE IDOL PLAYED ITS TRUMP CARD—
A HOST OF PHANTOMS FROM THE BEYOND!



WE'RE ALL PRETTY SCARED OF THE SUPERNATURAL—RIGHT, READERS? BUT WITH THE ANIMALS OF THE JUNGLE, IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND—

ROAR-RRRR!



LATER—BACK IN AMERICA—



OH, IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL— DOESN'T IT DO THINGS FOR THE EAST ROOM? JUST LOOK AT IT!



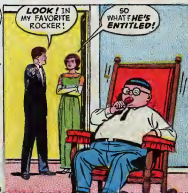
PERHAPS AN ASH TRAY IN HIS HAND?



I WON'T TOLERATE IT! I WON'T STAND FOR IT!

SOMETHING, PREZ?

COME WITH ME AND I'LL SHOW YOU!



LOOK! IN MY FAVORITE ROCKER!

SO WHAT? HE'S ENTITLED!

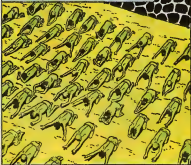
OH, WELL. SEE WHAT COMES OF HERBIE HAVING A PRIVATE LIFE?

OTHER MEN HAVE SONS THEY CAN BE PROUD OF, BOYS WHO DO SOMETHING... BUT WHAT HAVE WE GOT? A LITTLE FAT NOTHING WHO DOES NOTHING...

PLEASE, DAD... YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE!



BUT IN FAROFF AFRICA, THE PEOPLE OF MERANGA ARE BUSY WORSHIPPING FOR ALL THEY'RE WORTH. BUT WHAT IDOL, NOW THAT KAROD IS GONE--?



ACCEPT OUR OFFERING, OH GREAT GOD HERBIE!



From **YOUR EDITOR-** to **YOU!**

What can we say, readers—except that he's in again! We refer, of course, to the one and only Herbie Popnecker, the Great Man who's taking America by storm. Actually, his presence in this issue is a surprise to us. He walked down out of the sky and into our office, brushed a bit of stardust from his lollipop and said "I'm in". We tried to point out that the issue was closed and there wasn't any room for a little fat monster. But you don't say no to Herbie—not if you value your health. So here he is again, and it begins to look as if his appearances in "Forbidden Worlds" are going to become more frequent. And you'd better be glad of it, or else run the risk of a lollipop lambasting. Are you glad of it? Let us know, please, because we're going to arrange the frequency of Herbie's appearances in our magazine to the wishes of our fans. Send your letter to The Editor, "Forbidden Worlds", 331 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. To learn the reception called forth by his last visit to us, see some of the following letters!

"Dear Editor:-

I was surprised (and delighted) to find that the super-lollipop-wielding fat little kid, Herbie Popnecker, was back in "Forbidden Worlds". This kid must indeed be supernatural, for he has an influence over me that is hard to explain. Since his first story, I've been a fan of his. This kind of thing embarrasses me because I usually read only respectable science fiction comics, such as "Forbidden Worlds"—and leave us face it, Herbie is nothing but soap box opera. Not that I'm knocking Herbie, now—I get a kick out of the thought of a fat little kid that wears glasses and goes around sucking on a lollipop that can scare the dickens out of nearly everyone and put a hex on the rest. I only hope we will hear more of the indestructible Herbie. And if we do—Supertman beware!

—James H. Palmer, 6518 Belcrest,
Houston 17, Texas."

James, we get exactly the same kick out of Herbie that you do. In addition, we have to confess that we're just a little bit scared of him. It wouldn't pay to incur his displeasure, so we tread lightly whenever we're near him. And by the way—we love every inch of his fat little carcass!

"Dear Editor:-

I'm writing to tell you how much I have enjoyed "Forbidden Worlds". And the part of it I like best is Herbie. I would like to know if you can tell me how he got started. Where does he get his fantastic powers to talk to

animals and walk high in space without being killed? How is he able to talk to demons, witches, hobgoblins and ghosts? But whatever you do, keep up with Herbie—he's a really great comic star. I wish you could have a whole comics book devoted to the little guy. Tell him for me to keep up the great work!

—Terry Byrne, 1934 Lake Avenue,
Pueblo, Col."

How did Herbie get started? Sometimes we think he was always there, because a world without Herbie is really no world at all. Our first knowledge of him came when, without so much as a by-your-leave, he walked into our pages. About the source of his fantastic powers—Terry, you just don't butt into Herbie Popnecker's private business. You ask him, we haven't got the guts. Does he ask whom you talk to or how you walk?

"Dear Editor:-

I'm writing mainly to praise Herbie Popnecker. I really enjoyed his adventures in issue No. 110 of "Forbidden Worlds". I really like little Herbie, and as far as your comic book goes, it is not only interesting but fascinating! My husband—yes, I'm married—enjoys it too. I'm a nut about weird and out-of-this-world comics, plus mystery stories, and I found all these in "Forbidden Worlds". I was sorry to read that Paul Gambaccini of Westport, Connecticut, doesn't like your magazine. He was very childish in his letter to you, but this makes no difference—you have enough fans to make up for him. Keep up the fabulous work! Before I close, I would like to say that our landlady also enjoys looking at Herbie's picture. You see, she's German and doesn't read English, but Herbie's wonderful pictures got a thorough going over. Much luck and best wishes!

—Ann McGinnis, Edangen,
Germany."

Herbie seems to be everybody's sweetheart, Ann. You must admit that he's cute—in a repulsive sort of fashion! It was nice hearing from you.

"Dear Editor:-

Usually, I write to you and comment on each issue. But this time, I'm going to be different. Firstly, I would like to know if when "Forbidden Worlds" and "Adventures Into The Unknown" reach their 200th issues, they will have an all star issue like the ones they had when they reached their 100th. I know it's a long way off, but I can't help being curious. Again, I would like you to print the names of the top 20 stories ever

published in all the ACG comics, in your opinion. Just for fun, I have listed mine, to see how they would compare with yours: 'Delinquent In Outer Space', 'A Highly Localized Snowfall', 'Return To Karonia', 'Three Eyes Look Earthward', 'Heavenly Heavyweight', 'Welcome To Xenon', 'My Friend Jinks', 'There's A New Moon Tonight', 'Howee-eeee', 'Spacemen Against The Supernatural', 'So Long, Fellas', 'Come Back, Cynthia', 'The Danger From Below', 'The Train From Beyond', 'Frontier In The Stars', 'Ghost Of A Chance', 'Judas Goat'. For the last three, I have put what I think are the three best short stories ever published in ACG's line of comics—'Born To Be A Grocer', 'Out Of Nowhere', 'You'll Never Believe Me'. Sincerely—

—John Page, 5933 E. Elkport St.,
Lakewood, California

Yes, John, we'll publish special anniversary all-star issues to mark the 200th issues of both these magazines. Your list of all-time favorites is an excellent one. We agree with you on 9 out of the 20 you cite. Our list probably includes several others that you never had a chance to read. For what it's worth here it is: 'Heavenly Heavyweight', 'So Long, Fellas', 'Come Back, Cynthia', 'Born To Be A Grocer', 'My Friend Jinks', 'Judas Goat', 'Bravest Man In The World', 'Ghost Of A Chance', 'The Machine Named Spotty', 'Herbie And The Sneddiger's Salad Oil', 'The Many Lives Of Mark Martin', 'The Spencer Special', 'Ship Without A Helmsman', 'Pipe Dream', 'There's A New Moon Tonight', 'The Head Man', 'Herbie's Quiet Saturday Afternoon', 'Delinquent In Outer Space', 'The Train From Beyond', 'Back To Yesterday'.

"Dear Editor:—

'Forbidden Worlds' No. 110 had the best fantasy cover I've seen in some time, so naturally I looked for the name Schaffenberger written along the edge of the crystal ball. I'm still looking, with no success. By this time, I'm not even sure if Schaffenberger really drew this cover at all. Please, give the artist the credit he deserves. The artwork wasn't the only thing good about the March cover. 'He's back, folks!' was all the news I needed to know that this was going to be one good comic. Quickly passing over 'Punny Fish', where the bully-hero plot seemed to force stereotyped characterization, and 'Ghost Vessel', which was good enough if you like ghost stories, which I don't, I turned to 'Herbie And The Sneddiger's Salad Oil' and found that it lived up to my expectations in every way. It is the best Herbie story yet, the best story that FW ever published, and if you think I'm just flattering you so you won't call me a crank, I've stuck my neck out and nominated 'Herbie' as the 'Character Most Deserving More Frequent Appearance' in the Alley Awards. Shane O'Shea and Ogden Whitney are unchallenged as your best artist-writer team, but all too

often they produce stories to make you cry, which is a hard type of story to put over to a reader who constantly reads of incredible heroics and unspeakable villainy in other publications. It's nice to see Herbie suck his lollipop in every now and then and remind us that they also have a fine sense of humor. I hope that in the promised story featuring your artists and writers as characters, Herbie is the cause of it all. Other comics have put their writers into the story, but usually they play a small part, rather like Alfred Hitchcock playing hit roles in all of his movies. In your story, how about Herbie showing up and sending you guys out on errands the way he does his per Frankenstein monster. I'd like to see Ye Ed dropped into a situation such as some of your heroes face! Since Shane O'Shea will be writing the story, he can land himself a good, ultra-heroic role, but you will just have to do what you can with whatever comes along. P.S.: It may surprise you to learn that Paul Gambaccini isn't a crank. To other editors, he writes complimentary letters. Why is it that such readers are not satisfied with your efforts? Maybe you just aren't good enough. Even so, they have no cause to be impolite about telling you so. A more likely explanation has to do with willing suspension of disbelief, in order to read science fiction, a person has to accept plots more unusual than those found in other branches of literature. If he is not willing to suspend his prejudices, he will never like the stuff. By the same token, a person who has come to like a certain type of science fiction will be dissatisfied with any other type. What makes me wonder is how a person who can't realize that both action and human interest have their place in S.F. came to be a fan of fantasy in the first place!

—Rick Wood, Bellingrath,
Southwestern Memphis 12, Tenn."

A long letter, Rick...but filled with such excellent meat that we felt impelled to publish every word of it. Let's start with the revelation that the cover on issue No. 110 wasn't done by Kurt Schaffenberger, but was an Ogden Whitney product. We admit that you were right concerning characterization in "Punny Fish"—it was on the stereotyped side. We're not apologizing for this. You see, there are certain types of plots which demand a set type of character to go with them. And since there's nothing different about the character, we have to try to make the plot and action just as good as possible to make up for it. We hope we did so in this case. About a story involving our people here as characters—we published just such an effort in our "Adventures Into The Unknown" No. 140 April-May issue which should go on sale shortly. It's called "You'll Sleep As If You Were Dead", and features Shane O'Shea in a subsidiary role and Ye Editor as hero!

IND.

FORBIDDEN WORLDS

presents



AMERICAN
COMICS
466

NO 116
NOV-DEC.

HERBIE

12¢



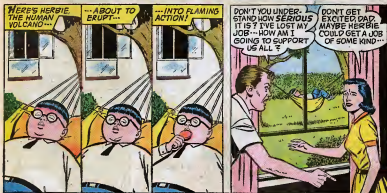
HERBIE... MY
LOVER! I JUST
CAN'T WAIT FOR
YOU TO COME
TO ME!

YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING
YET! THE FAT FURYS IN
AGAIN... IN...
"HERBIE GOES TO
THE DEVIL!"



IT'S NO USE LOCKING THE DOORS OR PULLING THE BLANKETS UP OVER YOUR HEAD. LET'S FACE IT-- **HE'S IN AGAIN!** THE NEW-MODEL ATOM BOMB, COMPOSED STRICTLY OF FAT ATOMS, AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO WITNESS THE UNFOLDING OF THE MOST AMAZING AND ASTOUNDING STORY THAT YOU'RE READING AT THE MOMENT. EVERY WORD OF IT TRUE AS...

HERBIE GOES to the DEVIL!



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HERBIE? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH. OTHER FATHERS HAVE SONS THAT RALLY AROUND AND HELP--- BUT NOT OUR SON. LIKE I SAID IN THE LAST STORY, HE'S A LITTLE FAT NOTHING!



BUT HERBIE WANTED TO HELP--- IF ONLY HE COULD THINK OF SOMETHING. AND TO AID CONCENTRATION AND THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING--- TRY A SECOND LOLLIPOP---



HE WAS STILL THINKING IN SCHOOL NEXT MORNING--- BUT SO FAR, NOTHING HAD COME TO HIM---



NOW LET'S GO DOWNSTAIRS. MATTER OF FACT, LET'S GO ALL THE WAY DOWN TO A CERTAIN FLAMING REGION, WHERE SATAN'S BOOKS ARE BEING CHECKED---

TCH, TCH. YOUR BUSINESS IS GOING BADLY. SATAN SEEMS AS IF YOU GET LESS AND LESS SOULS EVERY YEAR.

NONSENSE! YOU'RE JUST NOT SUCH A HOT BOOKKEEPER, THAT'S ALL.



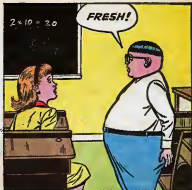
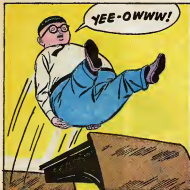
REALLY? YOU'RE NOT AS YOUNG AS YOU USED TO BE--- MAYBE YOU'RE LOSING YOUR GRIP.

I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S LOSING HIS GRIP! WHY, I'M AS GOOD AS I EVER WAS!



I'LL THROW THIS DART--- AND WHOEVER IT HITS, I GUARANTEE TO DELIVER HIS SOUL IN SHORT ORDER! WATCH!



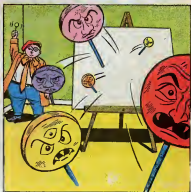
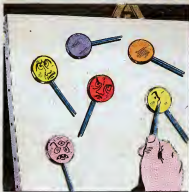
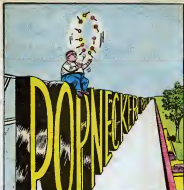




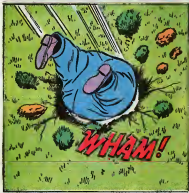




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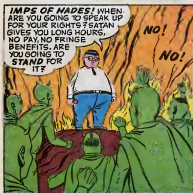


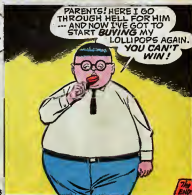
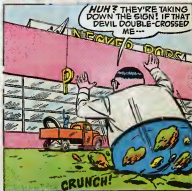












FROM YOUR EDITOR...TO YOU!

Calling all "Forbidden Worlds" fans! Here's an issue that's balanced from beginning to end. No matter what your individual preference, you should find it here. It runs the gamut—a new twist on the kookie supernatural in "Herbie Goes To The Devil", a different approach to interesting science fiction in "Dreams Of Glory", an interesting short dealing with the reincarnation theme and an absorbing tale of a weird, out-of-this-world beast. Let us know how you like this lineup, please, plus any suggestions which you may have for the future. Send your letter to The Editor, "Forbidden Worlds", 331 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. And now let's get on to some of the letters which our readers have been sending us. Excuse us, please, if they lean heavily towards Herbie Popnecker—you see, that's all that fans are exclaiming about these days! And depend upon it—you'll be seeing quite a lot of Herbie in future issues!

"Dear Editor:-

I am definitely pro-Herbie. I think his exploits are simply the utmost and his brain power is the kookiest, if you know what I mean. But just one question—why is everything of any kind of substance so insanely afraid of him?

—Charles Brazell,

1911 E. 6th St., Odessa, Texas."

What a question, Charles. You might as well ask why sensible people are afraid of earthquakes. Ob, if only they'd had Herbie at the Alamo! Too bad we can't accede to your request and put him in an annual, but he'd walk right out. Hates annuals. But if we handle him right, he just might show up in a super-special story every once in awhile.

"Dear Editor:-

This is the first time I've read about Herbie Popnecker, but I keep reading it over and over, because he's so good. How about giving us a Herbie annual?

—Ronald Campbell,

210 Oscar St., Taylor, Texas."

Well, Ronald, you're the second Texan in a row to come out cheering for our little fat character. Ob, if only they'd had Herbie at the Alamo! Too bad we can't accede to your request and put him in an annual, but he'd walk right out. Hates annuals. But if we handle him right, he just might show up in a super-special story every once in awhile.

"Dear Editor:-

I am for Herbie, the new super-hero. I have one thing to say. Don't make the story too much like a cartoon. Already you've made bullets turn aside, yelling out 'Gangway, it's Herbie Popnecker!'—and you've had an eagle talking. I wish that you would limit your impossibilities to Herbie's powers, and of course, you should add science fiction space stories. Please don't have

anything else as ridiculous as eagles and bullets talking. But you haven't gone too far to change. The explanation for the bullets talking? They were small robots with a mechanical brain, vocal chord eyes and nose installed to enable them to stay on an object's trail at the inventor's command. As for the eagle talking, the answer is simple. Herbie has the power to communicate with animals. A simpler explanation for the bullets would be that Herbie brought them to life through his powers as a unique way of keeping from getting hit and shocking the crooks. As for the comet talking? That wasn't a comet, it was an alien. Please, from now on, leave the talking to humans!

—Gary Acord,

723 W. 10th St., Dallas, Texas."

Help—the Rangers must be after us, because here's Texas again! Whoever said that the eyes of Texas are upon us sure was right. Now, Gary, excuse us if we're just a little bit defiant. We've got to speak the truth at all times, and it so happens that those bullets turned chicken when they saw Herbie. They recognized him, yelled in horror and made for the nearest exit because they were smart. And the eagle talked because all manner of things talk to Herbie and he talks back. All this is perfectly natural in Herbie's world, so you're going to have to get used to it!

"Dear Editor:-

This is the second time I have written to "Forbidden Worlds", and I hope that this time you can find space in your wonderful magazine to print it. I don't usually make it a habit to write to comics magazines, but yours is always an exception. I have just finished reading issue No. 110 and some strange power from the Unknown made me want to write to you. You have scored a great hit, in my estimation, with Herbie's latest adventure. The story was one of the most hilarious I have ever read and the art was great, too. The story 'Fanny Fish' was good, but could you please tell me why the Ketcham twins had such funny-looking hair? Also, why did Brad Fishet's eyes bulge out so? I didn't like the two-pager very much, but I don't blame you for that, because I realize that you can't really develop a story very well in only two pages. Lastly, 'Ghost Vessel' was quite interesting. All in all, thanks for the enjoyment you gave me in putting out this great magazine. Your fan forever—

—Sue Ducharme,

2512 Ocean View Ave.,

Los Angeles 57, Calif."

Hi there, Sue! You've accused us unjustly, because it so happens that we did print your first letter. This gives you the record of two letters and both published. Glad you liked that issue, and we hope to give you many others at least its equal. Let us hear from you often.

"Dear Editor:-

But you thought you'd never hear from me again! A week ago, I would have made the same bet—you see, I don't buy 'Forbidden Worlds' anymore. But I was looking for another comic yesterday, when suddenly I saw the name 'Herbie' on the cover of FW No. 110...and so.... The story I bought the comic for, 'Herbie And The Sueddiger's Salad Oil' had a rather good plot and was funny, too—because of the presence of Herbie Popnecker, of course. You said that regular characters don't lend themselves to amazing stories—I don't agree. Herbie is a good example of this. You could really make a fine series with him. John Force, Magic Agent, had the same potential, but you muffed him with poor art and too short stories. He could still make it big if you gave him the chance. 'Funny Fish' used that same ol' plot—that of the person/being/creature who has amazing powers, is laughed at and comes back to become really something. This is the cliché plot which warped 'Robertson's Robots' and which has been used so often. The rest of the issue was mere inferiority, devoted to two of your three standard plots: (1) A dead/elsewhere person saves the day which involves him personally (also see 'Through The Mists' and 'Verdict, Not Guilty' in FW No. 109). (2) An inanimate object remains faithful to its master. The third has already been mentioned. Your main fault is the extremely poor art which is carried in your magazines. Paul Reinman (who illored one of your better efforts, 'The Mirror That Stole Faces' in No. 109) can do better; in fact, many of his efforts elsewhere are superior. Ogden Whitoe is terribly hampered by lack of detail and background; a good artist would have made 'Salad Oil' a real winner. Chick Stooe is better than Whitney, but even he lacks detail. Your best artists are John Forte and Kurt Schaffenberger, whose efforts occasionally appear on the covers of your comics. So what do I like? you ask. 'You'll Make A Million Bucks Up There' was good, but the poor art was a hindering factor. My favorites of all time that you published are 'Born To Be A Grocer' and 'Heavenly Heavyweight', followed by 'That's The Way The Ball Bounces'. However, these, when compared to the efforts of a few deceased publications of the 50's, are sickly. One of the main reasons is realism—your stories lack human emotions. While you may show romance, hate and so forth, you don't generate it—a must for good stories. Once every three issues is not enough. One final word. I have been condemning your artists...they could be improved without changing talent, although their efforts could never become tops in comics, of course. Such an improvement list would include different colors, more shading, more detailed covers, no conversation on covers, removing

the banners 'Stories Of Strange Adventure' and 'Gripping Tales Of Suspense' and out using so much red and yellow, the most overused colors around. I sincerely hope you improve.

—Paul Gambaccio,

8 Elizabeth Dr., Westport, Conn."

We, too, sincerely hope that we improve, Paul, and we freely concede that there's always room for improvement. But we do disagree most emphatically with you on the extent of the need for improvement as far as we're concerned. We think that you're an intelligent person who knows what he likes and dislikes and can express his opinions with clarity. But your criticism is so stern and condemnatory that it becomes unfair. Specifically, our reference is to your statements concerning our stories. Being human, we've come up with some gorgeous lemons in our time—but these, fortunately, have been only a small minority. Let's look at the other side of the coin—we've come up with many standouts that have reflected credit on the comics field. And as far as formula plots go, we can't deny their presence in our pages. But Paul, let's be fair, please. Every moving picture or television play you see makes use of plots springing from basic formulas. Ditto for every novel you read. It's what you do with these plots that's the important thing—the manner in which you treat them, the "wrinkles" that you strive to insert, the fresh point of departure, the selection of incidents. You mention "You'll Make A Million Bucks Up There" with approval—yet this involves the formula plot of a guy going on a space journey and winning out over strange spacemen on the destination planet. What put this yarn over was the treatment. Shunning the customary heroics, we made our hero a poor slob who'd failed at everything he ever did in life and is now departing on one last, despairing effort to make good by opening a grocery market far out in space. It was this framework which made our story fresh and attractive. Actually, we feel that you go for the commonest formula of all—the formula that employs an all-conquering hero that wins through despite the stupendous odds against him. That's why you like characters—regular characters who can be vehicles for heroic powers—rather than the separate stories which we feature in our magazines. This last is only an opinion, we concede—we may be wrong.

"Dear Editor:-

Just finished reading No. 109 for the hundredth time and want to compliment you on 'Through The Mist'. This is one of the finest stories I ever read because it seems like it could really happen. Thank you again for a wonderful mag!

—Tim Riley,

4306 Century Blvd., Lynwood, Cal."

We included Tim's letter just to show you fans that there could be one that didn't mention Herbie!

WHO?

WHO CAN...

WALK ON WATER...

BEAT THE BEJEEPERS
OUT OF EVEN...

M-ME!

LOVE LIKE CASANOVA...

FLY LIKE A FURY...

WHIZ-ZZ

WHO BUT THAT LITTLE FAT NOTHING...
THE MIGHTY HERBIE!

FOLLOW HIS INCREDIBLE, AMAZING ADVENTURES IN HIS VERY OWN
MAGAZINE! RUSH TO YOUR NEWSSTAND RIGHT NOW AND SCREAM

"HERBIE! HERBIE! HERBIE!"

WE'RE TALKING to **YOU!**



SO WHAT'S
WRONG WITH

LAFFS?

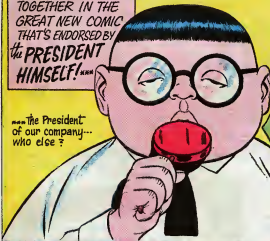


You got something against
THRILLS and CHILLS?



They're all
TOGETHER IN THE
GREAT NEW COMIC
THAT'S ENDORSED BY
the **PRESIDENT**
HIMSELF!

...The President
of our company...
who else?



It's
HERBIE.
of course...
THE FUNNY
FAT FURY
WHO'S GOT THE
NATION
GASPING!

SO BEAT IT OVER TO THE NEWSSTAND BEFORE
IT'S SOLD OUT--AND SCREAM FOR **HERBIE!**



THERE ARE 46 PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES WHO HAVEN'T BOUGHT "**HERBIE**" YET... AND YOU'RE ONE OF 'EM!



I'M A REASONABLE GUY ---BUT WHEN PEOPLE ARE STUBBORN, I BOP THEM WITH THIS HERE LOLLIPOP! LIKE *THESE* CHARACTERS ---ALL NON-HERBIE READERS!



BUT *THESE* FOLKS--- THEY READ "**HERBIE**"! GET WHAT I MEAN?



WE GET IT! WE, THE PEOPLE OF THIS REPUBLIC, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE GREATEST, MOST ROLICKING BELLY-LAUGH OF A LIFETIME, AGREE TO MEET THIS KOOKY CHARACTER IN--

"HERBIE"
...THE FUNNIEST ADVENTURE COMIC
ON THE STANDS!

HERBIE

CONDUCTING A SURVEY. YOU READING MY NEW MAGAZINE, "HERBIE"?

NOW D-DONT SWING ON ME, HERBIE---I HAVENT MISSED AN ISSUE, HONEST!



DO I READ "HERBIE"? WHY, ALL HEAVEN IS READING IT!



I--I'M NOT NEAR A NEWS- STAND B-BUT I'LL TAKE A SUBSCRIPTION. J-JUST DONT GET MAD, HERBIE --PLEASE!



YOU A "HERBIE" READER, NAPOLEON? YOU BETTER BE READY TO PROVE IT!



I B-BOUGHT T-TEN COPIES OF EVERY ISSUE---AND READ EACH ONE T-TWENTY TIMES! PLEASE DONT BOP ME WITH YOUR LOLLIPOP!



WELL? HOW ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU READING "HERBIE" REGULARLY?



Read **HERBIE!**

FOR ROARS... FOR THE MOST TINGLE-HAPPY FUN OF YOUR LIFETIME! HE'S NEW... HILARIOUS-EXCITINGLY DIFFERENT!

READ HIM OR WEEP... HELL SEE TO THAT!

Better buy

HERBIE!

NOW... AND REGULARLY!

This is **HERBIE**...



---THE FAT, FUNNY, FABULOUS HERO OF AMERICA'S NEWEST, LAUGHINGEST COMICS MAGAZINE!

THESE ARE HERBIE'S GLASSES, HANDY FOR HUNTING OUT FOLKS WHO DON'T READ HIS GREAT MAGAZINE.



AND THIS IS HIS LOLLIPOP, USED FOR BOPPING SUCH IDIOTS.



LASTLY HERE'S HERBIE HIMSELF---A FINE, FLESHY FIGURE OF MAN, RIGHT? RIGHT!

CROOKS HATE HIM...CREEPS DESPISE HIM...SPIES CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF HIM.



BECAUSE WHY? JUST LOOK---

I BOPPED THEM WITH THIS HERE LOLLIPOP!



SO WHO LIKES HIM? WELL... MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, TO MENTION JUST A FEW---



BECAUSE WHY? BECAUSE HERBIE IS THE HOWLINGEST, MOST HILARIOUS HERO EVER TO APPEAR IN HIS OWN LAUGH-PACKED ADVENTURE COMIC, THAT'S WHY!

HA-HA-HA!



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THEY DIDN'T BUY YOUR MAGAZINE, HERBIE?

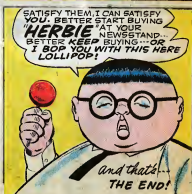
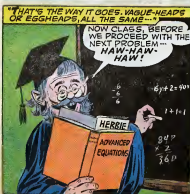
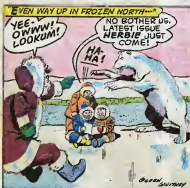


YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO GET BROKEN IN HALF, WOULD YOU, READERS? FOR SWEET SAFETY'S SAKE, BE SURE TO BUY...
America's
newest,
GREATEST
GIGGLE
and THRILL
COMIC...
HERBIE!

THE GREATEST



HOW TO STAY HEALTHY!



THIS IS **HERBIE**. VERY FAT. VERY FUNNY.



AND HE OWNS AMERICA'S FATTEST, FUNNIEST COMICS MAGAZINE.



BUT HOLD ONTO YOUR HATS... BECAUSE SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN ADDED...

A MYSTERY MAN!

A COSTUME HERO SUCH AS YOU'VE NEVER MET!

A PLUMP LUMP!



MAKE WAY FOR THE FAT FURY --OR SOMETHING--



WHO IS THIS FLYING BLINTZKRIEG, WHO WILL MAKE DARING RAIDS INTO THE PAGES OF THIS GREAT MAGAZINE WHENEVER THE FANCY MOVES HIM?

Read
HERBIE
REGULARLY

---AND FIND OUT THE LAUGH-PACKED ANSWER FOR YOURSELF!

THE POPNECKER PAPERS

A Herbie History

by Bob Hughes



It is 1964. A young comics fan has just returned from the newsstand where he passed up "The Rainbow Faces of Superman" and "The Mad Menace of the Macabre Mole Man" in order to read the latest adventure of his new favorite hero. He settles into his favorite chair and begins to read. Faced with an international crisis when the glamorous Rani of a buffer state between India and China is suspected of falling under the influence of a mysterious adventurer named Lastoza, the Secretary-General

of the United Nations calls upon one of his most trusted operatives to break up the plot. That agent is a short 13 year old boy who is (to put it mildly) overweight, wears glasses, continually appears to be three-quarters asleep and is sucking on a lollipop. The agent replies "Marble tournament isn't for two weeks yet. . . . Swell western coming to the Bijou, but it'll play at the drive-in later. Gotta get my teeth cleaned, but that can wait. . . . I guess I can take the case."

He then hitches a ride to Red China

on an ICBM, lands in Peking where he stuffs worms in Chairman's Mao's mouth during a speech, disguises himself as a lamp while trying to eavesdrop on invasion plans, and then makes love to the Rani herself. (He teaches her to make a cat's cradle and gives her a lemon lollipop.) Unable to beat this strange American's time, Lastoza captures him and throws him to a tiger, but instead of devouring the boy, the tiger asks for his autograph. Next Lastoza gets a maddened elephant to charge him, but the Plump



Unknown had a legitimate claim to be the very first horror comic. After the code, Hughes, along with every other surviving editor, had readjusted his vision of the supernatural into a place filled with ghosts, magicians, and other unexplainable, but basically innocuous phenomena. To Hughes, Herbie Poppecker was just one more of those phenomena.

The tale began at a PTA meeting of all places, as the featured speaker exhorted parents to take an interest in their children. "What this country needs is boys of action," he says. "Get them out doing something. No more laying around wasting time." Mom and Dad are there, clearly worried that their boy Herbie doesn't measure up to the speaker's standards. "He doesn't do anything or say anything or have any imagination! Good gosh! That I should be the father of a Little Fat Nothing!"

This first version of Herbie looks, if anything, even less alert than the later standard version. Dressed in white shirt and blue pants with a three inch long black tie and a bowl-shaped haircut, he wears round glasses and is not much taller than he is wide. The readers receive their first clue that there is something really strange about this boy when Herbie chides a tiger for growling at the zookeeper. "All the time he's cleaning up he keeps poking at me!" growls the tiger. "Now I'm gonna get even." As the tiger leaps at the zookeeper, Herbie grabs it by the tail and tosses it back into its cage. Next, Herbie rescues Senator Severns who is lost at sea. He walks down to the docks, out to the end of the pier and just keeps right on walking! Unlike most heroes who could defy gravity, Herbie never bothered to learn how to fly. He just acted like the ground was still under his feet. The effect was eerie, though somewhat reminiscent of Wayne Boring's then current technique of having Superman fly more-or-less standing straight upright. Herbie walks out to the wrecked plane and tells the Senator that there are emergency flares in the cabin. On the way home, Herbie defeats an alien invasion by vaporizing their ship with one of their own weapons. "It's about time

Lump grabs the elephant by the trunk and hurls her to the top of a mountain and then punches Lastoza into outer space. Declared a national hero in the Himalayan kingdom, our hero returns to America where he flunks an English theme on the topic of adventures he has had. "What can I say?" he shrugs. "I'm too fat to have adventures."

What's going on you ask? You have just entered the world of Herbie, the Little Fat Nothing with the Moe-Howard haircut, a speech pattern that makes the Hulk seem loquacious, and a glassy-eyed stare that could curdle anti-freeze. Although he certainly didn't look it, Herbie packed more power than any supernatural being this side of the Spectre. Although his last appearance was over 20 years ago, Herbie's popularity among fans and pros of that generation has never altered. Back issues command stiff rates in the collector's market on the rare occasions when they are offered for sale.

Herbie was virtually the first satirical comic of the silver age. As such his influence over the years has been enormous and can be seen from Forbush Man to *Ambush Bug* and *Boris the Bear*. Yet Herbie is almost unknown to a younger generation of fandom. One of the reasons for this is that Herbie's publisher, the American Comics Group, went out of business. Unlike a Marvel or DC character who has lost his title, Herbie has had no place to guest star or make cameos (other than an occasional convention program book cover). Probably more

important is the fact that humor comics in general, and Herbie in particular, are hard to describe in print. Writing a synopsis of the average Herbie adventure is about as effective as trying to explain a joke to a person who didn't get it. At least 50% of the appeal to Herbie was in the visuals which defy description. The hapless would-be fan writer is reduced to muttering "Well you had to be there." Still, Herbie occupies such a critical point in the history of humor comics that it would be a crime to ignore him. Consider the following an attempt to explain the unexplainable.

The First Adventure

Although I stated above that Herbie was the first satirical comic of the silver age, Herbie himself was not really a silver age character. He was born in that comic book limbo (at least to costume hero fans) known as the '50s. The first the unsuspecting world ever heard of Herbie Poppecker was in August of 1958. He surreptitiously slipped himself into the pages of *Forbidden Worlds* #73, an otherwise fairly run-of-the-press "mystery" title published by the American Comics Group (on the cover) or Best Syndicated Features (inside). The eight page tale, "Herbie's Quiet Saturday Afternoon," was not intended as the start of a series. In fact, creator Richard Hughes basically loathed series comics and believed strongly in the superiority of the one shot short story with the twist ending. At the time, ACG specialized in just that. Before The Code, the company had been one of the foremost peddlers of blood and gore horror stories. Their title *Adventures Into the*

you got home," yells Dad. "Where were you?"

"Just around" answers Herbie. "It was pretty quiet for a Saturday afternoon."

It may be hard to believe, but this type of story was pretty typical ACG fare. The despised misfit who turns out to be the only one who can save the world was a pretty popular gimmick with editor Hughes. It was also popular in the proto-Marvel and DC mystery books of the time. What made Herbie stand out was his appearance. Of all the losers ever concocted by Hughes and others, Herbie was the most complete. He was short. He was fat. He wore glasses. He was dull. Nobody liked him. He looked suspiciously like a teenage version of Charlie Brown. Yet inside, he was the most powerful creature who ever lived and never mind how! How could such a character fail to appeal to the average comic book reader, who, let's face it, was probably sitting alone in his room on a Saturday afternoon reading, instead of being out playing baseball? If a schlemiel like Herbie could save the world, there was hope for every body.

As I said, Richard Hughes never intended for Herbie to become a regular feature. It was the public which demanded the return of the character. Still, it took almost three years for Hughes to bow to that demand and bring the Fat Furry back in *Forbidden Worlds* #94 (June, 1961). Though the first story had been signed by artist Ogden Whitney, Hughes didn't want

to admit that he wrote virtually every single tale appearing under the ACG banner. Thus, "Herbie and the Spirits" was credited to "Shane O'Shea," one of Hughes' extensive list of pseudonyms, which also included "Zev Zimmer," "Pierre Alonso," "Greg Olivetti," and many others. It was another two years before Herbie returned again, this time for three quick appearances in *Forbidden Worlds* (110, 114, and 116) the last two featuring his name on the cover in larger letters than the magazine's title. Four months after that Herbie had his own title.

By now his character was in full bloom. His face became rounder and Whitney omitted his eyebrows, making his spectacles smaller. This made his face look even more expressionless, furthering the impression that the Plump Lump was actually a member of the walking dead. His sentences became shorter; many contained only one word. Most did not have subjects. "Bop you with this here lollipop," became his battle cry (actually it was more like a mumble. Herbie may have been the first comic character to forgo exclamation points). Readers loved him. Herbie was soon ACG's best selling title. Tony Isabella declared him the greatest character ever. Marv Wolfman submitted plot ideas unsuccessfully.

In many respects, Herbie's popularity had similarities to Spider-Man's. Despite his great powers and the fact that he had saved the world many times, he remained an unsung hero,

stuck in high school, looked on with contempt by his parents. Although he could help other people, there seemed to be nothing his powers could do to improve his own lot. The big difference between the two was that while Peter Parker constantly bitched and whined about his problems, Herbie simply shrugged his shoulders, stuck a new lollipop in his mouth, and went out to save the world again. In this manner, Herbie was probably heir to the existentialism of Eisner's Spirit or Segar's Popeye.

The other thing that made Herbie stand out (I mean besides the fact that it was funny) was the art. Ogden Whitney was an old timer from the golden age of comics who in many respects was in the twilight of his career. However, he still brought decades of professionalism and talents not generally associated with action/adventure comics to his work. Even back in the '40s when Whitney was churning out cardboard-copy heroes like Skyman, he was noted for his ability to draw real people. While many current artists are hard pressed to draw a realistic business suit, Whitney excelled in wrinkles and creases. While other artists concentrated on action poses, his characters knew how to relax, and what better talent could be asked for a strip in which the main character always seemed to be three-quarters asleep?

Whitney was also a master of facial expressions and caricature, which was necessary because of the incredible number of real people who paraded through the pages of *Herbie*. Guest stars included Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Khrushchev, Mao, Castro, U-Thant, Queen Elizabeth, Sonny Liston, Muhammed Ali, Rockefeller, DeGaulle, Cary Grant and the Beatles. Unlike the practice in most comics of the time, they were all referred to by name and the resemblances were painstakingly accurate. Also, unlike Superman and Spider-Man, Herbie was not above letting his political feeling be known, such as the time he dropped worms in Mao's mouth in the middle of one of his speeches (#5).

Whitney was also called on to draw one of the oddest assortment of villains and monsters, from two-headed, pink polka-dotted dragons, to dinosaurs with lion heads, camels with dual elephant heads, and others that are completely indescribable. All of these he managed to pull off with maximum verisimilitude. The anatomy, no matter how outlandish, looked right and the faces, no matter how inhuman, will still be capable of the widest range of expressions. Throughout all this, Whitney managed to avoid the two dimensionality that

Some folks from the Unknown give Herbie grief.



most artists seem to feel is acceptable when grinding out humor comics.

Just Am, That's All

Unlike your standard generic superhero, Herbie never had an origin story. However, a number of incidents throughout the series do shed some light on the whys and wherefores of this remarkable being. In issue #3, Herbie vacations on his Grandpa's farm because Dad can't stand the sight of him any more. Grandpa looks, sounds, and acts just like Herbie except that he has grey hair. When the Loch Ness monster threatens England, Grandpa says, "Offer your services. You're younger than I and even fatter. . . ." In #21, Herbie meets a viking princess who looks just like him. This is just one of a remarkable number of people Herbie meets that appear to share his gene structure. In #17 Herbie visits Miles Standish, who is one of Mom's ancestors. Except for the fact that Miles is taller, they look exactly alike. Then there's Ticklepuss, a cavegirl who is one of the few characters to appear in more than one story (#6 and #10). Not only does Ticklepuss look like Herbie right down to the glasses, but she appears to have most of his powers also. The biggest revelation comes in #15's "Call Me Schlemiehl," when we find that Dad himself used to be a little fat nothing before he had himself stretched on the rack in college in order to impress Mom.

It is clear from this that at least one source of Herbie's power is genetic, a double whammy in fact, since there are Herbie prototypes on both his mother's and his father's side of the family. Possibly an even more important source, however, is lollipops. In issue #12 we find that Herbie was given his first lollipop by circus owner Chuck Bleep, who earned his undying gratitude. In #22 it is revealed that orange lollipops are for flying, lemon for strength, and strawberry for invisibility. Beginning in issue #1, Herbie kept all his lollipops in a locked supply cabinet in his room with separate drawers for each flavor and a special drawer in the bottom for the really funny ones. The source of all these lollipops was revealed to be the Unknown in issue #15. The new director there discovers that an unauthorized mortal has been buying lollipops from their special factory and attempts to put a stop to it. Deprivation of lollipops depletes Herbie's strength, as in #2's "The Purloined Pops," in which a famished Herbie has to ask a flock of seagulls to pull him through the air. When the arch villain destroys all lollipops on Earth, Herbie is helpless, until he discovers that the sign on the Whammo factory is actually a giant



Herbie makes a political gesture.

lollipop (built to demonstrate how long they last). In issue #1, all of Herbie's pops are shattered. He manages to glue one mongrel pop together out of the pieces, but it causes him to fly around uncontrollably, boring into the ground and zipping high into the air, like a jumping bean. Even regular lollipops have strength-giving properties, as Herbie finds when he meets Hepzibah Higgins, a skinny, buck-toothed girl who has super-strength and wants him to marry her. Too late, he discovers that her father owns a lollipop factory.

Still another source of power seems to be Herbie's fat itself. In #18's "Clear the Road for Skinny," Herbie experiences drastic weight loss when bitten by a Hissian, a snake-like resident of the tiny nation of Hissia. His strength and powers are depleted until he manages to regain his standard avoida-pois. In Herbie, we have a character who makes the standards of proper behavior appear absurd. Herbie is fat, eats an improper diet, speaks ungrammatically, has no ambition, does not do well in school, yet is one of the most powerful beings in the universe, and is continually called upon to bail out those who do follow the rules of proper behavior. This is possible because the people who follow the rules are made to appear ridiculous slaves to ideas they barely understand and clichés they blindly follow, even when the evidence in front of them is plainly contradictory.

Elder Olson, in his book *The Theory of Comedy*, defines comedy as "an imitation of valueless action effecting a katastasis of concern through the absurd." This definition is based on the classic definition of tragedy in which the action brings about a catharsis due to fear and pity. Comedy, instead of producing catharsis, produces katastasis, which is a relaxation of concern by showing that not only was the concern unjustified, but totally absurd in the first place. Thus, in *Herbie*, the readers' concerns over being able to meet the general standards and expectations of the adult world are relaxed by showing that these stan-



dards and expectations are in themselves absurd and valueless.

Herbie himself is not the object of ridicule. Hughes expects his readers to identify with Herbie and to be entertained when his actions cause people and ideas of whose value they are already highly suspicious to be ridiculed. In *Herbie* it's the kids vs. the grownups and the deck is stacked so that the kids always win.

This reader identification was precisely what made *Herbie* successful. In many other attempts at humor comics, the object of ridicule is the readers themselves. People are much less likely to be entertained when their own values and identities are being ridiculed, although a certain amount of this can be slipped in once a general state of humorous good feeling has been established. Comics which become overly self-referential and find the majority of their humor in ridiculing the conventions of comics or the fans themselves alienate much of their potential readership and are less likely to gain commercial success. Although *Herbie* did occasionally parody the conventions of comics, it was never the major thrust of the magazine and was done in such a way that the readers' beliefs and values were not challenged. Hughes never confused the katastasis of his own concerns with that of his readership, unlike so many comic book professionals today.

Never Mind Where I Got It Either

Like all good super-heroes, Herbie had a collection of special weapons to help him in his quest for justice (although in Herbie's case it was probably a quest for peace and quiet). As noted above, he had a special lollipop chest where he kept all his special lollipops under lock and key. In the bottom drawer he kept special-purpose pops like the Which Way Pop used to track villains. Herbie also had a special ticker tape signal watch that President Johnson could use to contact him in emergencies. He was known to use

a utility belt to carry extra lollipops for emergencies. On special occasions he also exhibited the ability to produce just about anything that was needed, such as a bicycle pump ("Just happened to have on me").

Unquestionably, Herbie's main weapon after his lollipops was his parents' grandfather clock. Armed with a special time travel lollipop, he would tip the clock over on its side, climb into the pendulum cabinet and go sailing off into the time stream, usually in an attempt to prove that everything grown-ups thought they knew about history was wrong.

In the first recorded time trip (*Herbie #1*) at the request of Johnson and Khrushchev, Herbie goes to Merlin's time to find dragon tears which the super powers need in order to make Leonardo da Vinci's newly discovered rocket formula. He brings the dragon home and forces it to peel onions. "Other boys get a dog—Man's best friend! But not my boy, no sir! He has to come up with a monstrosity like that!" laments Herbie's singularly unobservant Dad.

In #4 Herbie visits the OK Corral and has to hypnotize Doc Holliday into losing his fear of guns in order to make the facts agree with the history books. In #6 Herbie brings back a caveman in order to show his teacher how smart they really were. In #8 Herbie proves that the American Revolution was caused by the fact that Washington's wooden teeth didn't fit properly. Seems George... Oh, never mind, you wouldn't believe it anyway. If it wasn't for Herbie, Chris Columbus would have sailed right off the edge. "Very embarrassing. Thought the world was round" Herbie thinks as he eases Columbus's ships around the corner.

Of course things didn't always work out that easily. In #15 the new director of the Unknown attempts to get rid of Herbie by giving him a time lollipop that doesn't need the grandfather's clock. Unknown to Herbie, the pop is designed to only work one way. He doesn't realize he's trapped until he's

back in the time of Napoleon. Fortunately, our resourceful hero has the presence of mind to use a super-aging lollipop to age himself and Napoleon back to the present. Once back home, the now 169-year-old Herbie has to battle the director for a special age restoring pop. Some of Herbie's visits to the past were very profitable for him and the family. In #17, Herbie visits the pilgrims after Mom finds out that she still owes money for her ancestor's passage on the Mayflower, plus 346 years interest! Herbie pays the fare, but leaves before John Alden can give him change. Dad then sues Alden's descendants for \$16.02 plus interest, which comes to six million dollars. (For the skeptics among you, at 3.5% interest compounded annually this is actually correct.)

Of course no good time traveler can go for long without a paradox, and Herbie gets his in #21's "Viking To Your Liking," in which he tries to exorcise a ghost. The ghost tells Herbie that he betrayed his crew in the past and so is doomed to haunt the Earth forever. Back in the past Herbie finds the Vikings about to invade England and ends up being the very person he went into the past to stop. After bopping himself with his own lollipop, Herbie returns to the present and explains to the ghost that there is nothing to do in Valhalla all day anyway, and convinces him that being doomed to roam the earth forever isn't really such a bad deal after all.

Of course, walking off with the family grandfather's clock is bound to be noticed eventually, even in the Popnecker household. Dad did notice it missing in issue #2 and called the police, but Herbie had it back in place by the time they arrived, which made Dad look like an even bigger fool than normal. To forestall these kinds of complications, Herbie was always looking for other ways to travel through time. He finally found one in issue #23 when he used a super-deluxe time travel pop and a propeller beanie to go back to the time of David and Goliath. Whatever drawbacks this

approach might have had were never made clear as this was the last issue.

Help Keep My Dad Out Of Jail

Probably the most important supporting character in the series was Herbie's dad, the incredible, inimitable Pincus Popnecker. Dad firmly believed in the American Dream and the Protestant Ethic. Hard work and business acumen were the secrets to everything. Unfortunately, though Pincus was capable of the first, he had absolutely none of the second. Continually involved in get-rich-quick schemes, he would have left the Popneckers in the poorhouse if it wasn't for Herbie's intervention. And for his troubles, what thanks did Herbie get? A continuing torrent of insults and abuse. Herbie's approach to life was just too different from his father's for him to be able to see any merit in him at all. Herbie was just a "little fat nothing," who would never amount to anything and wasted his time lying around all day. The fact that most of this lying was done in mid-air never seemed to register on Pincus.

Somehow, despite an avalanche of evidence to the contrary, Herbie managed to keep his great powers a secret from Dad. Herbie seemed to realize that Dad just wouldn't be able to handle it. In spite of all the abuse he received, Herbie loved his father and would do virtually anything to keep him happy. In *Forbidden Worlds #106*, for example, Herbie sells his soul to the Devil in order to make Dad (who was currently unemployed) a big business tycoon. Satan fixes it so that Pincus inherits, of all things, a lollipop factory. Everything worked out fine until old Lucifer sent Dracula and Frankenstein's Monster to collect. When Herbie organizes all the imps and demons into a union and they go on strike, Satan tears up the contract and throws Herbie out of the underworld. All is not perfect, however, for when Herbie gets home he finds that Dad has sold the lollipop factory because Herbie was eating up all the profits!

Dad kept trying to better himself though. In issue #3 he ran for president of the local chamber of commerce. As part of his campaign, he organizes a drive to collect money for the poorhouse. When the money he collected is stolen, Dad figures he's ruined. Herbie attempts to replace the lost money by, among other things, standing on a street corner in a Santa Claus suit with a bell and a kettle yelling "Help keep my Dad out of jail!" When Herbie discovers the money was filched by the professional fund raisers Dad had hired, the poorhouse

Our boy finds a pet, courtesy of his time-traveling clock.



ends up with twice as many donations as expected. In fact, so much money is raised that the inhabitants of the poorhouse take to lighting their cigars with \$30 bills!

Dad went through many other businesses. In issue #6 he had a balloon factory. Predictably, the balloons wouldn't float. In #10, Pincus went in to the bowling ball business, unknowingly acting as a front for the Black Whack's crime ring. In #12 Pincus Popnecker became a private eye in a story plotted by contest winner Richard Roesburg (a certain M. Wolfman was the runner up). With captions written in the best (or is it worst?) Sam Spide tradition, Pincus tries to track down a criminal who is stealing people's fat. In the process, he gets assaulted by a billy, is almost eaten by a bear, and hit by a falling safe. When Mr. Molecule decides to kidnap the biggest fathead in town, he unerringly chooses Dad.

In #18 after Herbie asks his friend Lyndon Johnson to get Dad a job, he's appointed ambassador to Hounghingia. To Dad's chagrin, his first duty is to settle a war between a race of snake people and a race of pig people. Of course Herbie does the real work and Dad takes all the credit.

Deep down, however Pincus Popnecker wanted his son to succeed and Herbie wanted to please him. In #9 Herbie used a magnet to fool Dad into thinking his attempts to teach Herbie archery had succeeded. Dad's bragging about Herbie's archery prowess gets Herbie into real trouble when Dad enters him into an archery tournament. Herbie has to get Robin Hood to really teach him to shoot. After this, he decides it's better to keep Dad in the dark, reasoning "If parents knew about me, they'd be so proud they'd bust. And who wants busted parents?"

Sometimes it was difficult keeping Dad in the dark though. In Herbie #11, Dad decides to take Herbie to Washington "to see where Pochahantas was born and Napoleon was buried." When President Johnson sees Herbie walking past the White House, he drags him inside to help him recover the B-Bomb (it's made from beans). Johnson has to cover for Herbie by telling Dad that he's being sent to a special camp for little fat nothings. In #16, Dad almost loses his mind when everyone in Washington claims to know Herbie and the Queen of England tells Herbie what a great honor it is to meet him. Dad finally decides he must have dreamed the whole thing.

Pincus Popnecker's biggest role was in #15's "Call Me Schlemiel!" in which Pud Bimbo, Dad's old roommate from Peepwhistle Prep shows up and mistakes Herbie for Dad! He invites himself over for dinner and is



Pincus Popnecker on the job...as a private eye, this time.

surprised to find that Pincus is not a little fat nothing anymore. It turns out that Dad had originally looked very much like Herbie, but while trying to win Mom away from Pud Bimbo he had dieted, exercised and undergone stretching on the rack in order to make himself handsome. Dad and Pud begin competing for Mom all over again. With Herbie's help, Dad finally beats Pud at boxing, swimming and the high jump. Mom's reaction is unexpected, however. "All of a sudden you're a loudmouth, just like that Pud Bimbo!" I can't stand him and I never could—and now I see that you're no better." Dad has to apologize and promise to go back to being his old schlemiel self!

If Dad was supposed to represent the fate of all those who bought into the ways and mores of adulthood unequivocally, then Professor Flipdome represented the adult who refused to grow up at all. Even so, the Professor could be as much trouble for Herbie as Dad. The professor lived next door to the Popeckers. When he can't find anyone to try out his new machine, he disguises himself as a busdriver and kidnaps Herbie's dad. The machine reduces a person in size and sends them to Minuturia, where everyone has a tiny duplicate. Herbie has to go in and rescue Dad. Once there, he finds the air too thin to support himself, so he's reduced to walking everywhere. When Dad sees Herbie in action beating up a bevy of monsters, he attributes it to Herbie's miniature double. After being restored to normal



Pincus Popnecker on the job...as a private eye, this time.

size, he chalks the whole adventure up to being a dream. For Dad to admit that such things could happen in real life would be to admit that all the values he stood for were meaningless.

Despite Flipdome's cavalier treatment of his father, Herbie considered him to be a friend, albeit one that could stand for some close watching. It was Professor Flipdome who invented the machine which created four duplicate Herbies in issue #9. When Herbie gets sidetracked at a lollipop sale, one of his doubles goes on to school and takes his place. Unfortunately, all it can say is "Bop you with this here lollipop." Over and over again. The doubles run amok all over the city and when the unsuspecting Herbie gets home, his parents are outraged, blaming him for all the damage. Puzzled and hurt, Herbie decides to run away from home. Once on the train, Herbie is finally confronted with his duplicates. "Odd. Other Herbies." Is his shocked reaction. "Eat me out of house and home. Better get away from them."

The four superfluous furies end up playing football for the New York Giants and Herbie feels he is well rid of them. However, he's certainly glad to have them back when Swami O'Toole and his gang seize all of Popeckerville as hostages. When the Swami traps Herbie in a vat of melted lollipop syrup, only the doubles stand between Popeckerville and oblivion. Unfortunately (?) their plastic finish is ruined by machine gun bullets and Herbie has to consign them to elec-



Uninvited guests drop in for dinner.

tronic oblivion.

The Professor was a genius certainly, but a totally undisciplined one. None of the gadgets he invented made any sense. They all worked, but who cared? In #15 he invented oxygenated pancake syrup so that it would never be necessary to breathe again. Flipdome was ambitious, industrious, and full of energy and ideas, just like Dad. His ideas were just as ludicrous and his chances of succeeding in becoming famous just as slim. The main difference between Dad and the Professor was that Flipdome accepted Herbie for what he was and treated him as an equal. His ambition was not tinged by the paranoia that seemed to plague Dad. (Well, he did kidnap Dad that one time, but he didn't mean any harm.) Perhaps the Professor was Hughes's conception of the best you could hope for in an adult—bumbling incompetency, childishness, but no rancor or hostility.

A Cheer And A Beer

For a series essentially about a young teen-ager, there was remarkably little reference to school in *Herbie*. Still, the same can be said for most modern "kid group" books. Perhaps children simply don't want to be reminded of school, and would rather believe their heroes are exempt from it.

In *Forbidden Worlds* #94 Herbie and his family move to a new town. Initially, the kids at school are distrustful of Herbie. When he brags about being very brave, they taunt him into staying in a haunted house overnight. Herbie ends up missing a day of school while battling spirits from the Unknown, but tells his teacher he was helping Mom with her crocheting. Besides the obvious parody of the old "dumb excuse to protect his secret" schtick, we see again the pattern of suspicion and mistrust of adults that so strongly pervades this book. Not that the kids in Herbie's class were much help in the haunted house either. In issue #6, Herbie uses his time-traveling grandfather's clock to bring a cave man back to modern times in

order to convince his teacher that primitive man was just as intelligent as his descendants. Not only does Bumbum impress Miss Marleybone with his ability to handle quadratic equations, but she ends up marrying him.

In issue #7, Herbie graduates from PS 45 and is faced with a big decision. "Not figuring on any more schooling. Got important things to do—like improving the world." However, a talk with President Truman straightens the boy right out. Education is important, even if you have to go to school to get it. Dad, of course, is set on sending Herbie to his old alma mater, Peep-whistle Prep (class of '44) and even wants him to pledge his old fraternity Tappa Kogga Koke (that's the soft drink!). The frat boys don't really think Herbie would be good for their image and put him through intense hazing. Herbie passes everyone of their fixed initiation stunts, including winning a ball game by batting with his lollipop. (The ball was an old friend. Used to be his grandfather's horse.) Nothing moves the frat boys, however, and in one of the few fits of temper he has in the series, Herbie flattens the frat house. Herbie still believes in education though, so when the school goes broke he manages to find oil on the property and brings in so much wealth that every school in America is improved. "Studying a little harder these days, you'll know why—I'm responsible. And if you've got any complaints—You want I should bow you with this here lollipop." (All right so he didn't pay attention in grammar class).

Since Herbie didn't succeed at Peepwhistle Prep, he enrolled at Hassenspefer High. In #21, Dad looks up Herbie's lollipops until Herbie joins the football team. Desperate for lollipops, Herbie tries out, using all his magic powers and is, of course, wonderful. But since we all know that Herbie's powers can never be used to his own personal advantage, the actual game is a disaster. Murgatroyd Wumpus, who is in line to be the next coach, smears glue on Herbie's shoes

in order to ensure that the game is lost and the old coach is fired. No longer on the team, Herbie has to resort to subterfuge to help Coach Bumpo get his job back, like disguising himself as the ball or the goal posts. Good triumphs over evil in the end and Wumpus is sent packing, but it doesn't do Herbie much good in getting his lollipops back. He finally has to resort to begging.

In #20's "Adventure at the Center of the Earth" Herbie tries to help Dr. Plumduffle, a teacher who is going to be fired if he can't learn to keep his class under control. In a gimmick reminiscent of issue #4's *Minutaires*, Herbie finds a race of fire-breathing demons at the center of the earth, every one of whom is an exact duplicate of someone on the surface. He brings Plumduffle's duplicate back and puts him in charge of the class for one day. You can imagine how good a literally fire-breathing teacher was at controlling the students. The principal is so impressed he doubles Plumduffle's salary.

In many respects, Herbie's teachers serve the same role as Dad. Despite almost overwhelming evidence, they refuse to see Herbie's powers. While Herbie has no problems at all dealing with Lyndon Johnson or Khrushchev as equals, local authority figures, the kind the leadership would most likely come into contact with, remain intractable. Although this made life difficult for Herbie, it also made these characters objects of ridicule for the "knowing" readers and increased their ability to identify with a character who was otherwise nearly omnipotent.

What Have They Got That Lollipops Haven't Got Better Than?

Any discussion of Herbie's relationships with women must keep in mind the fact that these stories were a product of their times. In 1964 Sue Storm's primary role in the *Fantastic Four* was to moon over the Sub-Mariner and Brainiac 5 refused to let Saturn Girl go on any of the "dangerous" Legion missions. Lois Lane spent all her time scheming to get Superman to marry her, or pulling Lana's hair out.

The first hint we had of Herbie's power over women was in "Herbie Goes to the Devil" (*Forbidden Worlds* #16). In an attempt to get Herbie to sell his soul, Satan offers to make him a great actor and sends him to Egypt to replace Richard Burton in "Cleopatra." Elizabeth Taylor attempts to make love to him, but Herbie refuses to take his lollipop out of his mouth. When he leaves, she is devastated and

refuses to accept Burton as a replacement.

The first time Herbie shows any actual interest in the opposite sex is in "What You Need Is a Girl, Herbie," from #2. Of course, now that Herbie actually wants a girl, his ability to attract one seems to have disappeared. Louella uses Herbie to make her old boyfriend, Alexander Bimble, jealous. First she asks him for a pet (he brings her a dinosaur) then Cinderella's original glass slippers (she can't walk in them), then Marie Antoinette's jewels (she doesn't believe they're real and throws them in the river). Frustrated, Herbie is last seen clutching a large package of lollipops, intent on drowning his sorrows in sugar.

In "A Caveman Named Herbie" (#6) our Fat Furry meets his match in a cavegirl named Ticklepuss. Ticklepuss was basically a female version of Herbie. The resemblance was uncanny, right down to the anachronistic glasses. Armed with a huge club, she clobbers Herbie over the head and drags him off to her cave. Our hero manages to escape but finds her brother Bumbum guarding his grandfather's clock. Bumbum accuses him of playing fast and loose with his sister and declares he will follow Herbie until he makes an honest woman out of her. Undaunted, Herbie brings him back to the 20th century and marries him off to his teacher.

In the only sequel ever in the series, Ticklepuss returned in issue #90. Dad gets an incredibly good deal on a new house, then finds out there's a salt mine next door. Things take a turn for the worse when the miners unearth a pterodactyl and a cave girl. Yes, it's Ticklepuss! She immediately picks up where she left off, dragging Herbie off by the hair. Since she is at least as strong as Herbie and has a pet pterodactyl to help, Herbie appears to be trapped. However, her attention is distracted by the man who sold Dad the house. Herbie tells him he'll get rid of Ticklepuss if he'll buy the house back from Dad. Once Herbie gets the check, he surrenders himself to Ticklepuss, but she rejects him and forces the shyster to marry her. "Well, did what I could," shrugs Herbie.

Herbie turns his talent for attracting women to positive use in "Beware the B-Bomb Buster" in which he makes suspected spy Lovely Horowitz fall in love with him in order to locate the B-Bomb. Unfortunately, she turns out not to be the spy at all.

In number #16's "It's Love, Lover" Herbie does his best to help out his school by raffling himself off at a charity bazaar. Hepzibah Higgins, a skinny, orange-haired, buck-toothed girl wins him and demands that he marry her. He tries to palm her off on

Richard Burtoo, then he gets Lyndon Johnson to name her to his cabinet, but even that won't divert her attention. In desperation, Herbie reveals his magic powers to her, but she isn't fazed. In fact, she can do everything he does! Finally, Herbie gets her to drop him (she marries a gorilla instead) only to find her father manufactures lollipops!

While these stories can hardly be looked upon as breaking new ground in the relationship between the sexes (indeed, Hughes was criticized even in those unenlightened times for his portrayal of women), they do express the Herbie philosophy quite well. Even infinite power can't do much about human nature, which gains its own strength from being completely irrational. Bearing in mind that, at 13, Herbie was really too young to have any serious interests in this area, Hughes pictures love for the most part as the accidental by-product of two persons who are acting at cross-purposes to each other. Granted, his women are pictured as venal and avaricious, but then, so are his men. There is only one successful love match in the Herbie canon and that's Mom and Dad. In "Call Me Schlemiehl," which is basically the story of their courtship, even they are seen at cross-purposes. Dad spends his entire life trying to make himself over into his arch-rival, Pud Bimbo, even sacrificing (perhaps unknowingly) the magic power the Popnecker family seems to gain from their fat, only to find that

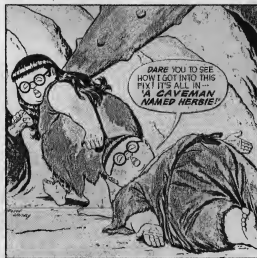
Mom never liked Pud anyway and most admires the qualities Dad has spent his life trying to repress.

Herbie's power over women seemed to be one of the few powers over which he had no control whatsoever. It worked sometimes and sometimes it didn't, usually to Herbie's detriment. The humor in the situation stemmed from Hughes's making love appear to be a valueless action, the results of which were almost always absurd. On the one hand, it is absurd that a woman could ever love a creature that looked and acted like Herbie, and on the other, when women turned him down, it was always for someone even more absurd, like Ticklepuss for the shyster real estate agent and Hepzibah Higgins for a gorilla. In this way Hughes deflates his adolescent reader's real concern over present or future relationships by making it clear that love is irrational and beyond even the control of the omnipotent.

You Got Bad Press Down On Earth...

The closest thing to a "universe" that ACG had was Hughes's concept of "the Unknowo," a mysterious spirit-filled resting place where the dead waited while it was determined whether they would go to heaven or hell (excuse me, "Hades"). Biliious green civil servants in druid robes called Grim Reapers were responsible for keeping the spirits in line during their

Ticklepuss, one of Herbie's many loves.



often centuries-long wait for processing. To relieve the boredom, spirits often returned to Earth for some fun.

Herbie's first recorded encounter with these characters was in *Forbidden Worlds* #94's "Herbie and the Spirits." Taunted by his classmates to spend the night in a haunted house, he meets Frankenstein's monster, a witch, a ghost, and a ghoul. He defeats them by soaking a bunch of lollipops in cough syrup. When the spirits eat them, they fall asleep, allowing Herbie to push them back through the doorway into the Unknown and seal it.

In *Forbidden Worlds* #110 Herbie actually seeks aid from these same spooks in order to track down Frenchy Horowitz, who has stolen all of the salad oil on Earth. This new, friendly, relationship with the spirits was a stroke of luck for Herbie. In *Herbie* #15 it is revealed that there is a lollipop factory in the Unknown which is the source of all of Herbie's really "special" lollipops. Herbie's first shipment of those pops must have been received some time before issue #1, because he needs them (along with the grandfather's clock) for time travel.

In #3, Herbie goes to the Unknown to ask help in subduing the rampaging Loch Ness Monster. The Reaper looks it up in his book and tells Herbie that Nessie has won the Tough Monster Championship 400 years running. "Nothing we can do to help." Back on Earth Herbie finds the two-headed monster playing football with some British tanks. Old Nessie tells Herbie that she's tired of not being believed in, then flattens Herbie like an accordion. This is only a temporary setback for our Plump Lump, however, and, after a dose of lollipop power, he bops Nessie clear back to the Unknown. Elizabeth is so pleased she makes

Herbie Duke of Popnecker.

In "High Spirits" a population explosion in the Unknown causes many spirits to be sent back to Earth. Predictably, they decide to haunt the seacoast vacation home Dad has just bought. In order to end the haunting Herbie has to discover the ghosts' worst fears and scare them away. The ghost of Eric the Red is scared of walruses, for example.

In "Pass a Piece of Pizza, Please" the Unknown appoints Dracula as a goodwill ambassador to Earth in order to help clean up their image. Drac is real upset when he visits a blood bank and they take blood from him. Then he discovers pizza is a suitable substitute and plots to steal every pizza on Earth until Herbie stops him.

In issue #22, after Magical Moe has destroyed all the lollipops on Earth, Herbie entreats a billy goat and a flock of goony birds to help him get to the Unknown so he can take magic lessons. Unfortunately, he only gets a 50 on the final and so can only perform feats of half magic. Herbie is saved when he finds an exhibit of ancient Assyrian lollipops in a museum and is able to restore his normal powers.

Fat, Fat, Like A Water Rat, And All Over Red!

By 1965, the super-hero boom was in full swing. Everyone was getting into the act. Even Archie Andrews had become a super-hero. Although Hughes had created and written several super-hero strips in the '40s, he had often expressed distaste for them. Regular characters with heroic powers who "win despite stupendous odds were the commonest formula of all and did not lend themselves to amazing stories

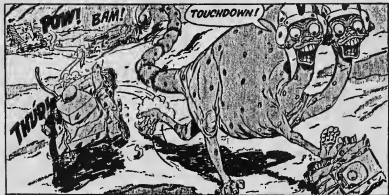
which ran the gamut from science fiction to supernatural with every conceivable type of lead character."

Still, declining sales for his anthology books finally forced him to give in and enter the super-hero derby. He certainly let his feelings for the genre show through in Herbie's premiere as the Fat Fury (#8), in which Lyndon Johnson called on the citizens of America to help defeat Mr. Horrible, a giant with super strength who was terrorizing the country. Herbie decides to go to American Hero School in order to get a license to fight crime. Typically, he flunks out, being unable to grasp the rudiments of flying, villain-spinning, and other fine arts. However, Mr. Horrible clobbers all the heroes who do graduate and when Dad threatens to try his hand, Herbie decides to take the law into his own hands and become an unlicensed vigilante. Dressed in Ma-Hunkel's traditional red underwear (a garb he would later pass on to Forbush Man), with a bath towel cape, a balloon with holes in it for a mask, a plunger on his head, and no shoes, Herbie leaps into action. In an epic battle at the Statue of Liberty, Herbie finally masters elementary villain-spinning and puts paid to Mr. Horrible. The Fat Fury continued his career after this, appearing in one story in every other issue. Dad loved him and demanded to know why Herbie wasn't more like him. He battled amazing villains like the Black Whack, Magical Moe, and ?, generally lampooning the style of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Marvel Comics. The fantastic three-page fight scene in #12's "Good Gosh! The Gorilla!" features just 10 dialogue balloons with an average of 3.5 words per balloon.

Herbie: "Fat Fury."

Gorilla: "Gorilla."

The Loch Ness Monster goes up the middle for a goal.



In #22's "Just Like Magic" the obligatory fight scene is reduced to one panel with the caption "72 paws, 6 socks, and 3 barns later...."

Generally, being a hero caused problems for Herbie. He kept trying to fly and crashing into the ground, stuck on his plunger. Elementary villain-spinning made him dizzy. The major drawback was that he was more famous as Herbie than as Fat Fury. His animal buddies, who could normally be counted on for support, ran screaming "It's fat, fat, like a water rat and all over red!" whenever they saw him. In "Good Gosh! The Gortil!" he gets tossed into the elephants' cage and they flatten him. Afterwards they ask, "Who are you?" "Flat Fury" he replies (it says that on his shirt). Puzzled, they pull off his mask, discover it's Herbie and apologize.

Herbie had been preceded in ACG's costume hero sweepstakes by Nemesis, who began in *Adventures In the Unknown* in December 1964 and Magicman, who appeared in Herbie's old home *Forbidden Worlds* beginning in February 1965. Both of these characters were ostensibly "serious" super-heroes. In actuality, they were so influenced by the camp craze that, when the inevitable team-up occurred in *Herbie #14*, they made the Fat Fury look realistic. Unlike Herbie, who knew that what he was doing was ludicrous, Nemesis and Magicman did not realize that they themselves were ridiculous. Even teamed up, Nemesis and Magicman were incapable of handling the evil machinations of Halfaman, Moronman, Pizzaman, and Garbageguy, but required the Fat Fury to pull their (ahem) fat out of the fire, or in this case, the ice, as criminal mastermind Roderick Bump had frozen them solid.

Having rescued the two heroes, Herbie stands stock still while they try to pummel him into submission in the standard hero-versus-hero battle. Since they can't make any impression, they offer to team-up and try to teach him to fly the right way. Of course, they fail miserably.

It is interesting that the only meeting of these characters took place in *Herbie*. The impression is that Hughes was trying to use the Fat Fury to boost the other characters' sales. The three heroes now united track down Bump and his gang stealing marshmallows. After falling into a vat of the stuff, the Plump Lump finally catches up to Bump and sits on his head reasoning "Marshmallow sticky. Villain stuck."

In his later adventures the Fat Fury battled Fu Manchoo, a two-headed, pig-tailed Chinese, hand picked by Mao Tse Tung to invade America because he looked just like an average American (it worked too). The incred-



Herbie as the Flat...er, Fat Fury.



ible scientific genius destroyed all the lollipops on Earth and then built a robot Fat Fury to commit crimes and destroy Herbie's reputation. Dracula imprisoned him in a pizza oven; Magical Moe (who wore a paper bag for a mask) also destroyed all the lollipops on Earth with his magical powers.

All in all, there were eight Fat Fury stories. By then it was 1967. The camp boom was over. ACG dropped the heroes and replaced *Herbie* with *Gasp!* a new "mystery" title. It lasted four issues, then ACG stopped publishing comics. Ironically, less than two years later, horror anthologies entered a new boom period that threatened to drive the super-heroes off the stands. It would be too late for ACG though.

Pretty Quiet For A Saturday Afternoon

Herbie occupies a unique niche in comics history. From 1958 to 1967, *Herbie* was virtually the only comic feature of its type available to the average comics fans. All the other heroes of the so-called silver age were deadly serious, with only an occasional bit of forced levity (such as the April Fool Superman stories). No other character seemed to be willing to stand up and admit that being a super-hero was a ludicrous occupation or that the average super-villain belonged in a mental institution. This condition had not existed in the '40s when any number of features which poked fun at the whole genre were running, including *Scribbly* and the *Red Tornado*, *Supersnipe*, *Plastic Man* and the *Spirit*. In the '50s, this humorous approach culminated in *Mad Comics* and its legion of spin-offs and imitators. By 1958, *Mad Comics* had become *Mad Magazine*. The super-hero parodies which had been one of its staples were replaced by features like "Celebrity Walkers" and Melvin, the original mascot, was replaced by Alfred E. Newman.

Although there continued to be ha-

mor in comics like *Sugar* and *Spike* and *Fox and Crow*, it was a humor born of innocence. More cynical "adult" humor pretty much disappeared. *Herbie* was alone in exposing a new generation of readers to the possibilities of a humorous approach to the adventure genre. After *Herbie* came the *Inferior Five*, *Not Brand Echh!* (whose Forbush Man inherited Ma Hunkel's outfit from Herbie) and many others. The camp craze had begun as a result of the Batman TV show, so it's doubtful that Herbie was the direct cause of this explosion. Camp was different anyway. Instead of providing a katastasis of concern for the problems of adulthood, it ridiculed the dreams and values of childhood. Instead of assuring their readers that the Real World was even more ludicrous than comic books, the camp comics simply reinforced the average adult's judgment that reading comics was a silly waste of time. The readers of these titles quickly took the hint and overall sales dropped.

Still, the influence of *Herbie* can definitely be seen in the comics produced by the generation that grew up reading it. *Howard the Duck* re-invented the idea that comic book humor did not have to simply lampoon other comics. *Cerebus the Aardvark* proved that comic books could lampoon anything and still last over 100 issues. A case could even be made for Herbie's influence on straight adventure strips. The speech patterns of the Incredible Hulk and Rorschach of *The Watchmen* both bear an uncanny similarity to that of the Fat Fury.

The Canadian publisher Sword in Stone has just acquired the rights to ACG's comic line, including *Herbie*, and they promise to revive the plump lump in both new and reprint adventures.

But until then, and even as parody comic after parody comic (and even comics which are parodies of parodies) bites the dust, and publishers lament the sad state of humor in America, we can all look back on *Herbie* and think "Bop you with this here lollipop!"